VOL. CXL
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THE BYSTANDER,
NOVEMBER 25, 1936

The BYSTANDER

CHRISTMAS NUMBER 2/-

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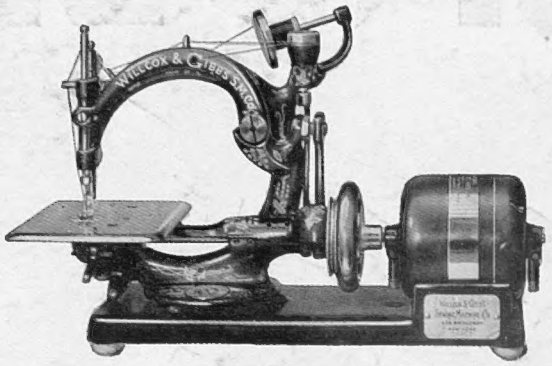

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No. 1823a. Vol. CXL.

The Bystander

Christmas Number, 1938

Post Early to Avoid Delay

Christmas Morning : By Anna Zinkeisen

Christmas at Cold Comfort Farm

By Stella Gibbons

Illustrations by C. F. Tunnicliffe

It was Christmas Eve. Dusk, a filthy mantle, lay over Sussex when the Reverend Silas Hearsay, Vicar of Howling, set out to pay his yearly visit to Cold Comfort Farm. Earlier in the afternoon he had feared he would not be Guided to go there, but then he had seen a crate of British Port-type wine go past the Vicarage on the grocer boy's bicycle, and it could only be going, by that road, to the farmhouse. Shortly afterwards he was Guided to go, and set out upon his bicycle.

The Starkadders, of Cold Comfort Farm, had never got the hang of Christmas, somehow, and on Boxing Day there was always a run on the Howling Pharmacy for lint, bandages, and boracic powder. So the Vicar was going up there, as he did every year, to show them the ropes a bit. (It must be explained that these events took place some years before the civilising hand of Flora Poste had softened and reformed the Farm and its rude inhabitants.)

After removing two large heaps of tussocks which blocked the lane leading to the Farm and thereby releasing a flood of muddy, icy water over his ankles, the Vicar wheeled his machine on towards the farmhouse, reflecting that those tussocks had never fallen there from the dung-cart of Nature. It was clear that someone did not want him to come to the place. He pushed his bicycle savagely up the hill, muttering.

The farmhouse was in silence and darkness. He pulled the ancient hell-bell (once used to warn excommunicated persons to stay away from Divine Service), hanging outside the front door, and waited.

For a goodish bit nothing happened. Suddenly a window far above his head was flung open, a voice wailed into the twilight.

"No! No! No!"

And the window slammed shut again.

"You 're making a mistake, I 'm sure," shouted the Vicar, peering up into the webby thongs of the darkness. "It 's me. The Rev. Silas Hearsay."

There was a pause. Then—

"Beant you postman?" asked the voice, rather embarrassed.

"No, no, of course not; come, come!" laughed the Vicar, grinding his teeth.

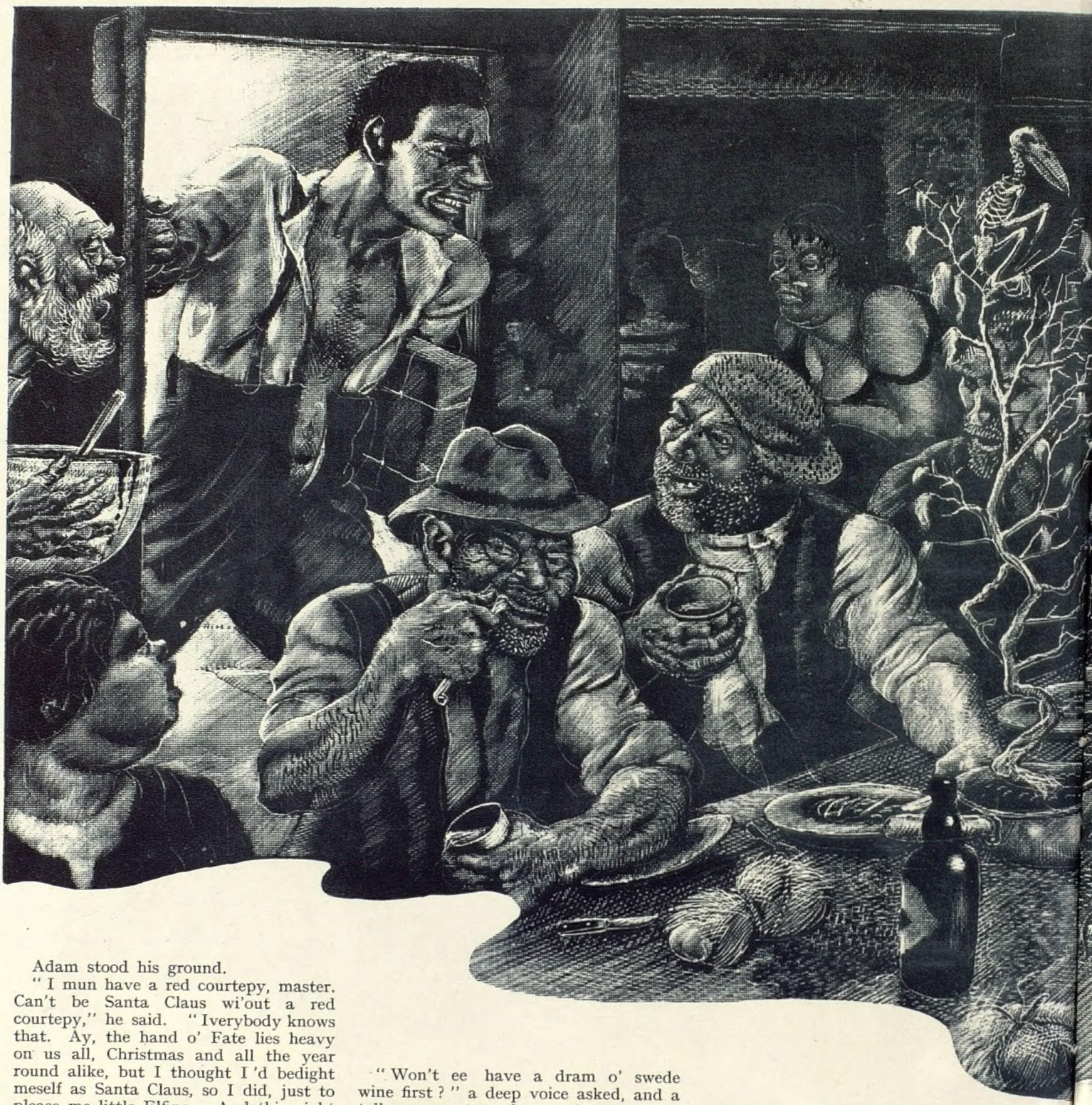
"I be comin'," retorted the voice. "Thought it were postman after his Christmas Box." The window slammed again. After a very long time indeed the door suddenly opened and there stood Adam Lambsbreath, oldest of the farm servants, peering up at the Reverend Hearsay by the light of a lonely rushdip (so called because you dipped it in grease and rushed to wherever you were going before it went out).

"Is anyone at home? May I enter?" enquired the Vicar, entering, and staring scornfully round the desolate kitchen, at the dead blue ashes in the grate, the thick dust on hanch and beam, the feathers blowing about like fun everywhere. Yet even here there were signs of Christmas, for a withered branch of holly stood in a shapeless vessel on the table. And Adam himself . . . there was something even more peculiar than usual about him.

"Are you ailing, man?" asked the Vicar irritably, kicking a chair out of the way and perching himself on the edge of the table.

"Nay, Rev., I be niver better," piped the old man. "*The older the berry, The more it makes merry.*"

"Then why," thundered the Vicar, sliding off the table and walking on tiptoe towards Adam with his arms held at full length above his head, "are you wearing three of Mrs. Starkadder's red shawls?"



Adam stood his ground.

"I mun have a red courtepy, master. Can't be Santa Claus wi'out a red courtepy," he said. "Iverybody knows that. Ay, the hand o' Fate lies heavy on us all, Christmas and all the year round alike, but I thought I 'd bedight meself as Santa Claus, so I did, just to please me little Elfine. And this night at midnight I be goin' around fillin' the stockin's, if I 'm spared."

The Vicar laughed contemptuously.

"So that were why I took three o' Mrs. Starkadder's red shawls," concluded Adam.

"I suppose you have never thought of God in terms of Energy? No, it is too much to expect." The Reverend Hearsay re-seated himself on the table and glanced at his watch. "Where in Energy's name *is* everybody? I have to be at the Assembly Rooms to read a paper on *The Future of The Father Fixation* at eight, and I 've got to feed first. If nobody 's coming, I 'd rather go."

"Won't ee have a dram o' swede wine first?" a deep voice asked, and a tall woman stepped over the threshold, followed by a little girl of twelve or so with yellow hair and clear, beautiful features. Judith Starkadder dropped her hat on the floor and leant against the table, staring listlessly at the Vicar.

"No swede wine, I thank you," snapped the Reverend Hearsay. He glanced keenly round the kitchen in search of the British Port-type, but there was no sign of it. "I came up to discuss an article with you and yours. An article in *Home Anthropology*."

"'Twere good of ee, Reverend," she said tiredly.

"It is called *Christmas : From Religious Festival To Shopping Orgy*. Puts the case for Peace and Good Will very sensibly. Both good for trade. What more can you want?"

"Nothing," she said, leaning her head on her hand.

"But I see," the Vicar went on furiously, in a low tone and glaring at Adam, "that here, as everywhere else, the usual childish wish-fantasies are in possession. Stars, shepherds, mangers, stockings, fir-trees, puddings. . . . Energy help you all! I wish you good-night, and a prosperous Christmas."

He stamped out of the kitchen, and slammed the door after him with such violence that he brought a slate down

on his back tyre which cut it open, and he had to walk home, arriving there too late for supper before setting out for Godmere.

After he had gone, Judith stared into the fire without speaking, and Adam busied himself with scraping the mould from a jar of mincemeat and picking some things which had fallen into it out of a large crock of pudding which he had made yesterday.

Elfine, meanwhile, was slowly opening a small brown paper parcel which she had been nursing, and at last revealed a very small and mean-looking doll dressed in a sleazy silk dress and one undergarment that did not take off. This she gently nursed, talking to it in a low, sweet voice.

"Who gave you that, child?" asked her mother idly.

"I told you, mother. Uncle Micah and Aunt Rennett and Aunt Prue and Uncle Harkaway and Uncle Ezra."

"Treasure it. You will not get many such."

"I know, mother; I do. I love her very much, dear, dear Caroline," and Elfine very gently put a kiss on the doll's face.

"No, missus, have ee got the Year's Luck? Can't make puddens wi'out the Year's Luck," said Adam, shuffling forward.

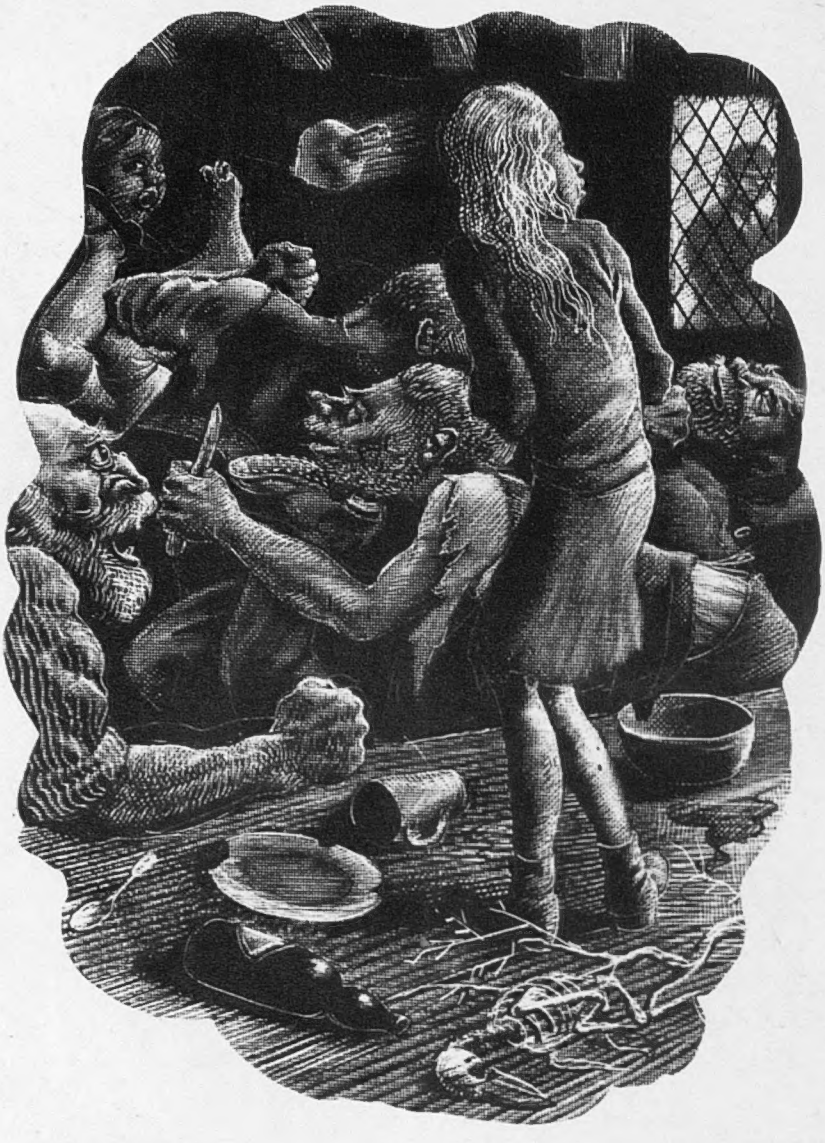
"It 's somewhere here. I forget——"

She turned her shabby handbag upside down, and there fell out on the table, among other objects:

A small coffin-nail.
A menthol cone.
Three bad sixpences.
A cracked doll's looking-glass.
Small roll of sticking-plaster.

Adam collected these objects and ranged them by the pudding basin.

"Ay, them 's all there," he muttered.



"Him as gets the sticking-plaster 'll break a limb; the menthol cone means as you 'll be blind wi' headache, the bad coins means as you 'll lose all yer money, and him as gets the coffin-nail will die afore the New Year. The mirror 's seven years' bad luck for someone. Aie! In ye go, curse ye!" and he tossed the objects into the pudding, where they were not easily nor long distinguishable from the main mass.

"Want a stir, missus? Come, Elfine, my popelot, stir long, stir firm, your meat to earn," and he handed her the butt of an old rifle, once used by Fig Starkadder in the Gordon Riots.

Judith turned from the pudding with what is commonly described as a gesture of loathing, but Elfine took the rifle butt and stirred the mixture once or twice.

"Ay, now tes all mixed," said the old man, nodding with satisfaction. "Tomorrer we 'll boil un fer a good hour, and un 'll be done."

"Will an hour be enough?" said Elfine. "Mrs. Hawk-Monitor up at Hautcouture Hall boils hers for eight hours, and another four on Christmas Day."

"How do ee know?" demanded Adam. "Have ee been runnin' wi' that young goosepick Mus' Richard again?"

"You shut up. He 's awfully decent."

"'Tisn't decent to run wi' a young popelot all over the Downs in all weathers."

"Well, it isn't any of your business; so shut up."

After an offended pause, Adam said:

"Well, niver fret about puddens. None of 'em here has iver tasted any puddens but mine, and they won't know no different."

At midnight, when the farmhouse was in darkness save for the faint flame of a nightlight burning steadily beside the bed of Harkaway, who was afraid of bears, a dim shape might have been seen moving stealthily along the corridor from bedroom to bedroom. It wore three red shawls pinned over its torn nightshirt and carried over its shoulder a nosebag, the property of Viper the gelding, distended with parcels. It was Adam, bent on putting into the stockings of the Starkadders the presents which he had made or bought with his savings. The presents were chiefly swedes, beetroots, mangel-wurzels and turnips, decorated with coloured ribbons and strips of silver paper from tea packets.

"Ay," muttered the old man, as he opened the door of the room where Meriam, the hired girl, was sleeping over the Christmas week. "An apple for each will make 'em retch, a couple o' nuts will warm their wits."

The next instant he stepped back in astonishment. There was a light in the room and there, sitting bolt upright in bed beside her slumbering daughter, was Mrs. Beetle.

Mrs. Beetle looked steadily at Adam, for a minute or two. Then she observed:

"Some 'opes."

"Nay, niver say that, soul," protested Adam, moving to the bedrail where hung a very fully-fashioned salmon-pink silk stocking with ladders all down it. "'Tisn't so. Ee do know well that I looks on the maidy as me own child."

Mrs. Beetle gave a short laugh and adjusted a curler. "You better not let Agony 'ear you, 'intin' I dunno wot," said Mrs. Beetle. "'Urry up and put yer rubbish in there, I want me sleep out; I got to be up at cock-wake termorrer."

Adam put a swede, an apple and a small pot in the stocking, and was tip-toeing away when Mrs. Beetle, raising her head from the pillow, enquired:

"Wot's that you 've give 'er?"

"Eye-shadow," whispered Adam hoarsely, turning at the door.

"*Wot?*" hissed Mrs. Beetle, inclining her head in an effort to hear. "'Ave you gorn crackers?"

"Eye - shadow. To put on the maidy's eyes. 'Twill give that touch o' glamour as be irresistible; it do say so on pot."

"Get out of 'ere, you old trouble-maker! Don't she 'ave enough bother resistin' as it is, and then you go and give 'er . . . 'ere, wait till I——" and Mrs. Beetle was looking around for something to throw as Adam hastily retreated.

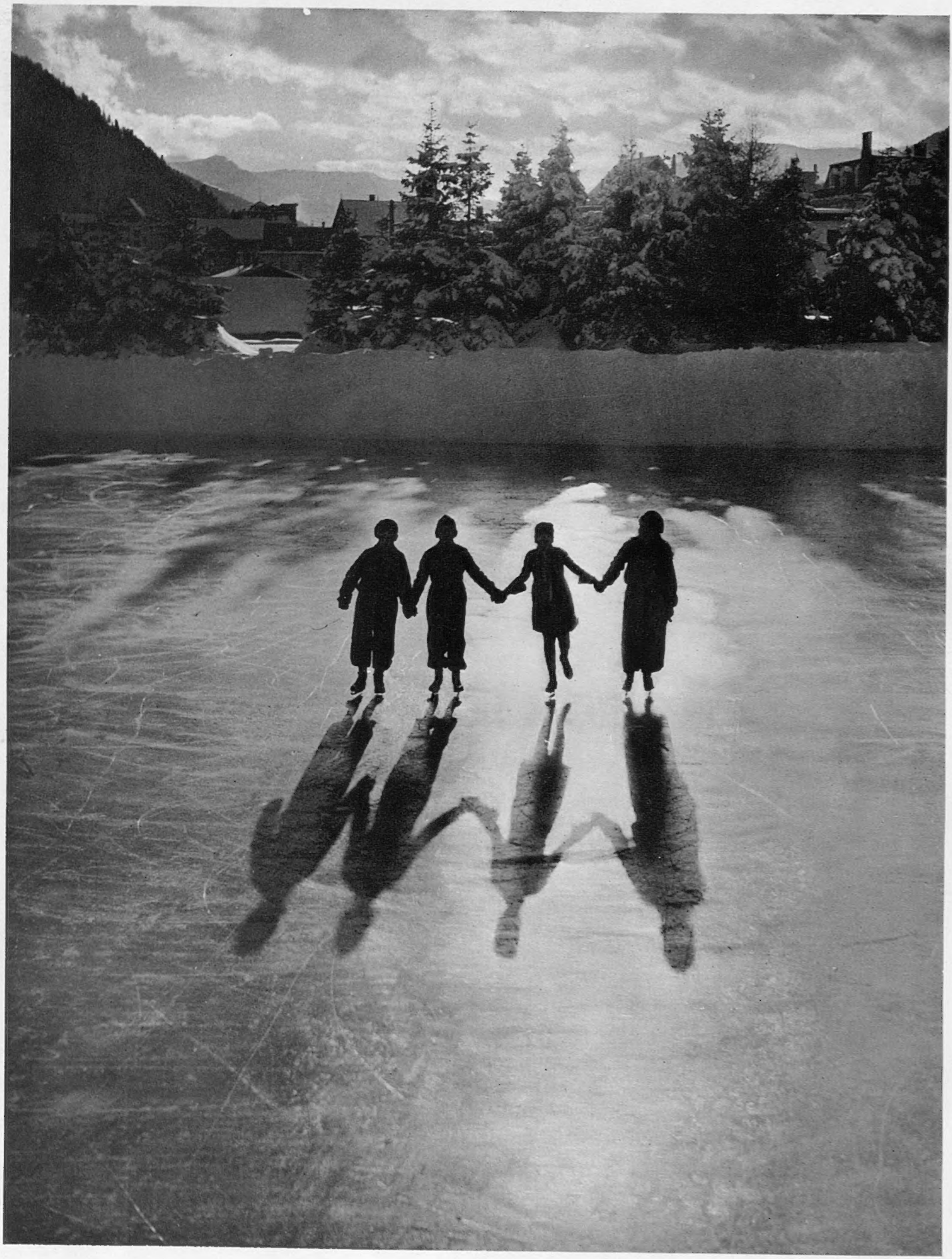
"And I 'll lay you ain't got no present fer me, ter make matters worse," she called after him.

Silently he placed a bright new tin of beetle-killer on the washstand and shuffled away.

His experiences in the apartments of the other Starkadders were no more fortunate, for Seth was busy with a friend and was so furious at being interrupted that he threw his riding-boots at the old man, Luke and Mark had locked their door and could be heard inside roaring with laughter at Adam's discomfiture, and Amos was praying, and did not even get up off his knees or open his eyes as he discharged at Adam the goat-pistol which he kept ever by his bed. And everybody else had such enormous holes in their stockings that the small presents Adam put in them fell through on to the floor along with the big ones, and when the Starkadders got up in the morning and rushed round to the foot of the bed to see what Santa had brought, they stubbed their toes on the turnips and swedes and walked on the smaller presents and smashed them to smithereens.

So what with one thing and another everybody was in an even worse temper than usual when the family assembled round the long table in the kitchen for

(Continued on page 82)

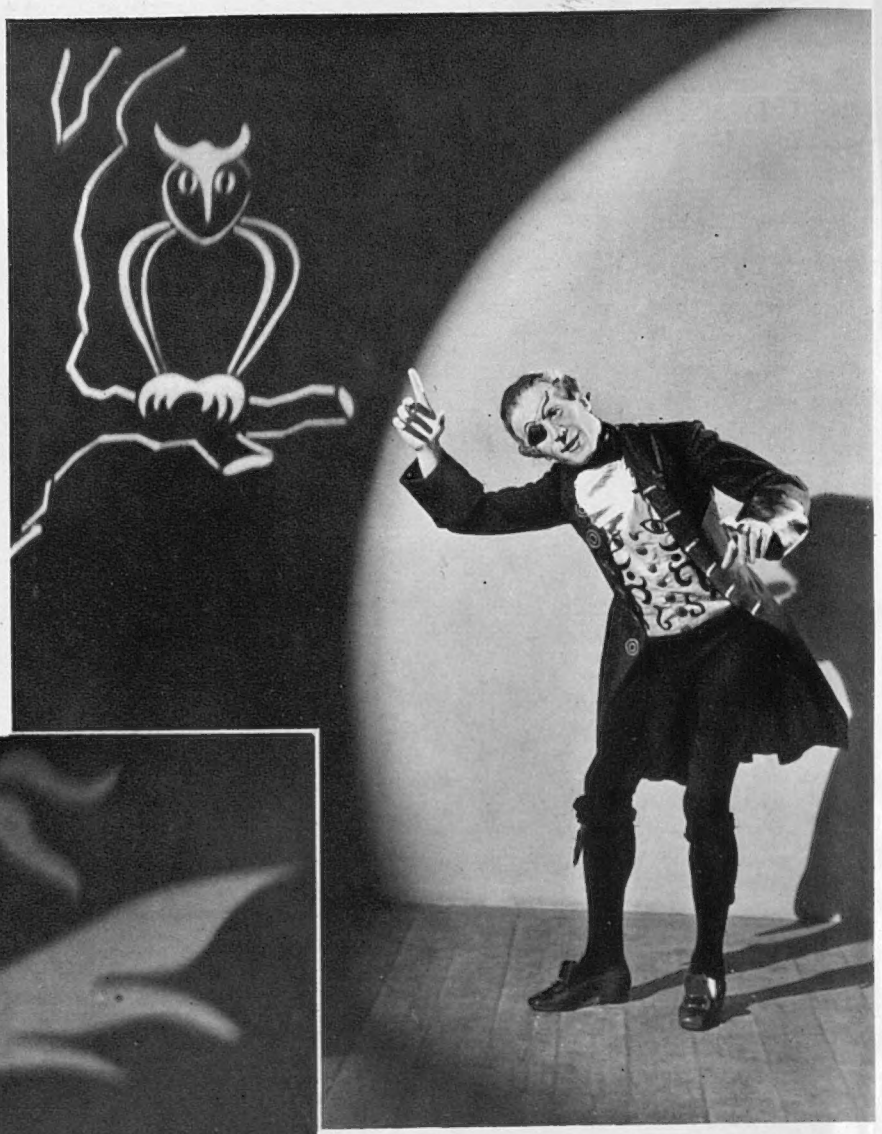


Norman Parkinson

Christmas Eve on the Ice

Fairy Tales

Four Characters Materialised in the Ballet. Supreme Creator of Stage Magic



The Astrologer *and his magic bird, the Golden Cockerel that knew the future and crowed a warning of events to come, belong to a poem by Pushkin. In the ballet by Fokine to Rimsky-Korsakov's opera music, "Le Coq d'Or," the creeping, wily old Astrologer was an English dancer, H. Algeranoff*

Anthony

Anthony

Drosselmeyer *belongs to the fairy-tale ballet, "Casse Noisette"; at a children's party he gives to little Clara the magic toy, the Nutcracker who shows her the way to the Kingdom of Sweets. He came to ballet by way of Dumas' version of a Hoffmann tale. When Petipa, the choregrapher, sent the scenario to Tchaikovsky, he demanded "awe-inspiring but comic music" for Drosselmeyer's entrance. At Sadler's Wells Claude Newman takes the part*

The Prince and Cinderella, *hero and heroine of a fairy-story classic, principal boy and girl of a thousand pantomimes, prototypes of an infinity of characters in plays and novels, have come newly to life this year in a Russian ballet. Fokine has set the old tale to Frederic d'Erlanger's music, and David Lichine fitted the lost shoe to Tatiana Riabouchinska's foot*

Baron

Norman Parkinson

Fisherman's Evening

Champagne for the Old Lady

By Osbert Sitwell

Illustrations by Holland

One of the most peculiar qualities of gambling is the power it possesses to make even the laziest man work hard, if only for a limited period; the period being, of course, limited by the money he has—or can borrow—to lose. Any gambler will toil through long, exhausting hours until daylight creeps cruelly through the curtains to reveal columns and shafts of cigarette-smoke and a suffocating atmosphere in which only germs could thrive; toil, at that, only in order to squander as much money as he could gain elsewhere by honest work in an infinitely shorter time. . . . Certainly I laboured far harder in the Casino—or "the Studio," as, for that reason, I preferred to call it—than I do now in writing this story.

Roulette was the game. We were both of us far too poor to afford to gamble, and we both liked to lose our money in different ways. John Treguze had invented a real system for it, and whenever he had lost at the tables the whole of the money he had taken in with him, he would comfort himself with the same vague sentiment: "It 's no good breaking off now. I ought to give my system a fair trial." As for myself, I relied for my efforts upon intuition—a gift which can prove quite as expensive as any more intellectual method, for he who is endowed with it just scatters the counters over all the numbers that catch his eye or take his fancy. On the other hand, should he win, the laurels that crown prophecy are added to those of triumph.

We often argued the faults of our various ways of play. To begin with, I would point out to John, his methods were too complicated: for, if you were determined to experiment with a system, this necessitated taking with you to the table an immense quantity of counters of every sort, from ten thousand and five thousand francs down to hundreds and tens—far more than you could afford to lose; but the possibilities of a system, a thing so high above mere chance, justified in your mind the slight risk, as you saw it, of losing them. Indeed, it became a duty. (If you had lost heavily before, it was not because your system had betrayed you, but because you had not played it long enough.) And then, always just as the end to which you had so long been progressing was at last beginning to come in sight, human frailty entered too; either you forgot for a single throw to back one of the essential numbers, or the ball might be started oversoon, so that you were not given the time in which to complete your usual lay-out of counters, or you found that you had already, without noticing it, lost all the money you had brought in, and so were obliged to miss the very spin that would have made your fortune. Whereas my lack of system—which, in itself, almost amounted to one—was simplicity itself, easy to manage: you took as many counters as you wanted, placed them where you liked, and when you had forfeited them all, you either left the building or obtained some more—and lost them in addition. No fuss or brain-fag. . . . Nevertheless, at times when I scanned John's face, looked at his dark, luxuriant hair, his regular and determined features, his eyes, that, though short-sighted, were so far-seeing, or regarded his large frame, his system seemed to me so well to match and express his physique that I wondered whether he might not win with it after all.

That night at dinner, on the terrace in front of the hotel, we discussed these problems again. Dinner lightened the sense of our losses: it was a warm night of early summer, and the grass, of so vivid a green, and growing singly from the soil like the tenderly nurtured hairs on the head of a bald man, the flowers and palm-trees and kiosks and cupolas of this holy city of chance, presented the enchanting vistas of a mid-Victorian stage-setting. And all this beauty had been created out of the money lost by gamblers! We began to feel that we, too, had "done our bit" toward it, for this evening we had been victims. . . . But soon, over our brandy, we began to talk of other things, until it was nearly time to go, to start again. . . . John chose a cigar—to smoke later, he said, when he was winning, for it helped him to keep his head cool: and then we spoke of cigars, how expensive in France and England, how cheap and good they were in Holland and Germany — and in Austria; where, he informed me—for he had at one time lived there—even women, and especially those of the former, aristocratic régime, smoked them in preference to cigarettes . . . I wondered if I had ever seen a woman smoke a cigar in England? . . . But I was sure I had not, for it would look so odd that one would remember it.

We walked across to the Casino and found its marbled saloons, smelling so strongly of post-offices and old scent, unusually crowded, airless to the point of suffocation. A pleasure cruise had touched here this afternoon, and the pleasure-crusaders were standing round the tables in staring groups, ox-eyed with Swiss or Scandinavian wonder, and getting very much in the way of the habitual, as it were resident, gamblers: those old ladies with delicate complexions enamelled over thousands of cobweb-like wrinkles, with many veils and bags, and a slight, harassing twitch, who, harmless old flotsam of Edwardian days, compose the steady population of such places. Little processions of black-clothed croupiers, with down-turned eyes, like the mutes at a funeral, marched through the rooms, guarding a coffinful of counters.

The public rooms were too thronged to-night for John to be able to obtain the share of the croupier's attention which his sytem demanded: besides, it was far too hot and one felt penned-in at the table, as though a sheep-dog would soon round one up, so we entered the Salle Privée, usually to a certain degree free of tourists. It was now about a quarter to eleven, and the gambling was in full swing: it seemed much cooler, though we found that the cruising parties had even penetrated here in their urge

to gape. In addition, there was, of course, the usual Salle Privée circle of old witches, with tousled white hair, sitting round the table, staring at the wheel, mumbling spells and curses through nut-cracker jaws. They never played themselves now, all their losses were in the past, but they paid still to enter in order to inconvenience the real players as much as they could by taking all the chairs, so that the others had to stand up, thus too far from the table to be able properly to place their stakes. John, however, found a good seat, next the croupier, and began sorting out and arranging his columns of counters as a preliminary. I stood for a moment to watch. The old lady who had at the same time taken the empty chair next him, attracted—and held—my attention. She differed so greatly from those all round her who so plainly lived in the town and made this their headquarters. Unused as she must obviously be to the Casino, she looked too good—too *morally* good, I mean—for her environment. Well over seventy, I should say, she was slight in figure, her complexion was that of a girl of seventeen, and her eyes still had a youthful, meaningless caress in them when she looked at you. She was dressed quietly in black velvet. A sort of black lace mantilla framed her head, and flowed over her soft, white hair, being tied in a wimple under the chin, thus emphasising a profile that was, even now, of a du Maurier-like calm and purity; and she carried, as her only impedimenta, two fans, one painted, the other of black lace: these she put down on the table by her. Regarding her, one saw that she was, in fact, one of those rare creatures, an old lady who, besides retaining her beauty, had retained her prettiness; a far more difficult achievement.

I reflected how lucky John was to find her as a neighbour instead of one of the usual, clawing harpies of the Casino, and then left him, in order to have a drink in the bar. There people were swallowing coffee and cocktails and brandy and every sort of drink for every hour. For a while I listened to their desultory fragments of talk. An elderly, voguish American gigolo with very smooth, black hair, and hands flapping like a seal's flippers, was seen remarking to a much older American woman, dressed in a low evening dress of white lace sprinkled with pink roses, "My dear, it's chic, and it's soignée (swànee), but it gets you nowhere!"

When I returned to the table John was immersed in his system and had lit his large cigar. Smoking was, of course, allowed, but I noticed (as he did not, for he was too busily occupied) that the pretty old lady next him, with her soft white hair and large, soft blue eyes, had begun to show symptoms of distress, to cough and fan herself gently. John's great frame, posed next to hers, served to make her look still smaller and more shrinking. The coven of Casino witches round the table, with their gnarled, veined, grabbing hands that might have been carved from the root of a box-tree, their hard faces and circular parrot's eyes, seemed by no means impressed by this display of sensitiveness, and glared cynically at the victim (this, no doubt, would have been their attitude at any show of natural feeling), but the strangers near by, and the barricade behind her of Scandinavian and Swiss tourists, soon became interested and sympathetic, solicitous on her behalf. What a shame for a great big man to smoke a huge cigar like that, next to her, their faces said plainly! Probably in the old French manoir whence she must have sprung, she had never even seen a cigar, far less smelt one. (How curious, indeed, to see a lady of that kind in the Casino at all: she was not at all of the type they had expected to discover; must, somehow, have wandered in here by mistake.) But that was the rich all over, trampling on the feelings of the poor and refined. Why, though she was sitting down, if you looked, she was not even playing! Too poor to afford it, that must be the explanation. There was self-restraint for you! But you did not see people of that stamp nowadays; too gentle and good for this gas-mask, weakest-against-the-wall world.

The old lady was by this time fanning herself vigorously, first with one fan, then with the other. She would take one up, and then put it down again on the table, near John's counters. Her manipulation of these instruments was wonderfully expressive. Like that of a geisha, or a great Chinese actor, every movement bore its burden of significance. She turned her exquisite profile away from her neighbour, and his vile habits, as though to obtain air. By now the cigar and the system were well under way, and I do not think that, until this minute, John had been at all aware of the growing interest and disturbance round him. But suddenly the old lady became vocal, began to complain audibly, partly to herself, partly to the crowd, in beautiful old-world French: and the crowd started to take her side, to murmur in their various doric tongues. (As she spoke, I wondered was there not, after all, a hint of foreign intonation in that telling, vibrating voice; was not the use of idiom a little too perfect for someone speaking her own language?) The croupiers alone remained unmoved, their eyes glazed with

fatigue and boredom, or with a slight, furtive and reminiscent smile hovering round their colourless lips, according to their types. Now she fanned herself almost truculently for one of so gracious a personality, grimaced, showed her distaste in many evident ways, and finally made an open protest to the croupiers and the world in general. The croupiers remained silent, indifferent, but the world in general responded. Once more she appealed to the nearest croupier, who, waking himself from a despondent trance, in which, obviously, he despaired of humanity and its greed, declared that he could do nothing; smoking was allowed.

She demanded to see the chef-du-parti, and plied the fans incessantly, taking them up, putting them down, holding them at angles, in order to protect herself, and using them to attract the crowd's attention and to point out to them the delinquent. Meanwhile, John had grown conscious of the tension in the air, and had become thoroughly annoyed, for his neighbour had created and worked up this scene without ever addressing a single request to him personally: so he continued to smoke and endeavoured, against increasing odds, to maintain outward calm and to concentrate successfully on his complicated system of gambling. Eventually, however, the muttering and the general, carefully cultivated feeling of antipathy toward him affected his nerves, and, turning toward the pretty old lady, he offered to put out his cigar, adding that he would have been delighted to do so at any previous moment had she seen fit to ask him. She did not even reply. It was too late: she was offended beyond repair. Elegantly, with conspicuous grace of carriage and dignity, she collected her fans, rose from the table, and glided out of the room in a rustle of resentful black velvet. The onlookers glared furiously at John, who, in return, blew out defiantly a small cloud of smoke. Poor old lady, they said, to treat her like that. What a shame! A great big brute, with no respect for age or delicacy. But how truly she had shown her breeding! How beautifully she had walked out, without a word! Why, she could not have done it better if she had practised it for years! There was a real lady for you! You didn't see that sort nowadays.

John certainly felt uncomfortable at her ostentatiously quiet departure (moreover, he had been losing again for some time, though he had begun well this evening, when he first arrived. Because gambling has an element of exhibitionism in it; the player, to win, must compel the wonder and admiration and even envy of the spectators. Their disapproval and dislike will ruin his game). The whole affair had depressed him and spoilt his evening—but it was not until ten minutes or so after she had left that he realised that all his high counters had gone with her. The better system had won.

The pretty old lady, I was told afterward, was an Austrian, in spite of the elegant and lovely French she spoke. And it was her custom always to select an evening when the rooms were crowded with Swiss and Scandinavian naifs for the testing of her system. The smoke-screen was a regular trick, and one that usually worked well, since large cigars and quantities of counters seemed to go together in the Casino, like the chatter of a conjurer at the moment of counterfeiting his magic, her protests were designed to distract the attention, both of her audience and of her chosen dupe, from the sleight-of-hand which was in progress before them. The opaque film from the cigar resembled, too, the cracking of the magician's pistol, while the smoke itself afforded some disguise, comparable to the cloud of ink thrown off by an octopus when engaged in combat, in order to mask its manœuvres—except that, in this instance, it was the octopus, still more wily, who compelled her prey to emit the concealing veil. But, had she been ejected by the authorities, doubtless aware of her game, a riot would most surely have ensued, so firmly did she always establish herself in the hearts of the onlookers.

I did not stay in the Casino long enough that evening to see the end of John's system. (We were leaving the next day.) The rooms were far too hot, and I strolled out toward my hotel. It was delicious. The feathery palm leaves lay motionless on the air, laden with the scent of orange blossom and strong-smelling night flowers. On my way back I passed a large café, like an illuminated conservatory, with a uniformed Tsigane band stationed near the entrance, playing waltzes. The chairs set outside looked so inviting that I took one and ordered a drink. In the opposite corner sat the pretty old lady, nodding her head in time to the waltz the band was playing; she had evidently just finished her supper; an empty half-bottle of champagne stood in a silver pail of ice by her side. And, as I got up to go, I noticed that in the manner of many compatriots of her sex in the old days, she was just lighting a cigar.

THE END.

The Christmas Pudding: A Survey

By Maurice Lane-Norcott

Strolling along Chelsea Embankment on Christmas Eve

IT is related of the late James McNeil Whistler, the eminent Victorian painter and wit, that while strolling along Chelsea Embankment one Christmas Eve, to see his mother, he was stopped by a certain Mrs. Noggins, the wife of a local pastrycook, who said to him with a curtsey: "Excuse me, James McNeil Whistler, eminent Victorian painter and wit, but what do you mix your Christmas puddings with?"

Glancing at her satirically, the late James McNeil Whistler retorted: "With brains, madam."

The great man then strolled on, leaving this certain Mrs. Noggins simply covered with confusion.

Needless to say, there is very little truth in that old piece of scandal, and I only drag it in here because it makes a splendid opening for a treatise on Christmas puddings.

SECTION I.
THE PUDDING: HOW TO OBTAIN

There are, of course, a number of excellent ways of obtaining Christmas puddings that are not generally known to the public. Among the more satisfactory of these I would mention the following:

BY GAMING (i.e., dicing with strangers for puddings).

BY POACHING (i.e., sending retriever-dogs into the large shops to bring back puddings in their mouths).

BY A PLEBISCITE (i.e., voting that other people's puddings are yours).

BY CHARM.

Let us here take the case of a well-nurtured young Mayfair girl who decides to obtain a Christmas pudding by the latter (and easiest) method.

Well, with this end in view she puts on her most soigné gown and smartest chinchilla cape and strolls to the corner of Berkeley Street, where she stands modestly looking at a daring display of pantie-girdles in a shop window. She is on the point of entering the shop and ordering a dozen, when a handsome young man, whose rich appearance denotes that he is in the position to make gifts of puddings to his women friends, approaches her and raises his hat. The following conversation should then take place:

HE (*courteously*): May I take this opportunity to wish you a very merry Christmas?

SHE (*simply furious at being spoken to without an introduction*): You bounder! Oh, you unspeakable beast to force your conversation on a young and unprotected girl!

HE (*adroitly*): Pardon me, but I think we met last summer in the sea at Deauville, didn't we?

SHE (*tossing her head*): Impossible! Last summer I was in Chamois shooting chamois!

HE: Don't you mean Chamonix?

SHE (*blushing prettily at her absurd mistake*): Why, how silly of me! Of course I mean Chamonix!

She bows demurely and strolls on, nervously swinging her handbag. For a moment the young man hesitates. Then he runs after her and takes her arm with a profuse apology.

HE: Forgive me for mentioning it, but that's not the correct way to swing a handbag. You must use your wrists correctly and follow through. Permit me to show you.

He takes her handbag and swings it rhythmically.

SHE: How extremely kind of you to show poor little me!

HE (*enthusiastically*): I could show *you* anything!

SHE (*suddenly catching sight of some Christmas puddings in a window*): Oh, look! What scrumptious puddings! How I could tuck into one of them!*

HE (*gallantly*): Then you must allow me to give you one with the compliments of the season.

SHE (*hastily lowering her eyes*): Oh, no; I couldn't, really! My people would be furious if they learnt that I had accepted a pudding from a strange man!

HE: Then we'll keep it a secret between us! Now which one do you prefer?

SHE (*shyly pointing at the largest one*): It's awfully bold of me, I know, but I simply dote on that one!

She takes his arm protestingly and with a little cry of refusal, drags him into the shop.

You see? It is quite simple to obtain plenty of Christmas puddings if you have sex-appeal and look long enough at pantie-girdles.

* Note how subtly the subject of puddings is introduced.

Modestly looking at a daring display of pantie-girdles

" You silly, flighty thing," laughed Mrs. Beeton

Sketches by Botterill

A cold compress for headaches

SECTION II.

THE PUDDING, HOW TO MAKE

This, admittedly, is infernally boring, and should only be practised as a last resort. The main thing is to stir the pudding vigorously with a spoon.

Before finally dismissing the subject, though, I would like to recall an experience which befell my aunt, Mrs. Molesworthy, many years ago when staying with her old school chum, Mrs. Beeton.

It seems that one December afternoon my aunt went into the kitchen to dry her goloshes—she had been out sliding—and was amazed to find her chum stirring what she imagined to be mud in a receptacle which she took to be a hip-bath.

" Why, Alice ! " exclaimed my aunt. " Whatever are you making ? A face-pack ? "

" You silly little flighty thing ! " laughed Mrs. Beeton. " Face-pack indeed ! Why, it 's a Christmas pudding ! "

Well, naturally, this rather took my aunt's breath away, because up till then she had always supposed that Christmas puddings, like statues and cricket balls, were cut out of some solid substance.

" And what are the ingredients, Alice ? " she asked, curiously.

" Oh, eggs, and flour, and treacle, and raisins, and nuts, and candy peel, and suet, and brandy, and nutmeg, and cloves, and sultanas, and ginger, and lots and lots of things ! " said Mrs. Beeton enthusiastically.

" Any tar ? " asked my aunt, thoughtfully.

" Any *what*, Matilda ? " said Mrs. Beeton, quite taken aback at this question.

" Any tar ? " repeated my aunt. " You know, to give it that sticky, black look."

" Goodness gracious, no ! " exclaimed Mrs. Beeton hastily.

" Ah, well, live and learn," said my aunt, philosophically. " Although, God knows, I don't care."

And with that she popped her goloshes into the oven and went off to assist Harry Beeton to hang the mistletoe.

Well, the whole point of that story—which up till now has been pretty pointless—is this. When making a Christmas pudding at home—if you must make a Christmas pudding at home—always remember : *no tar.*

SECTION III.

THE PUDDING : WHAT TO DO WITH THE LEFT-OVER BITS

I am sometimes asked by householders if I can offer any practical suggestions for using those endless cold slices which keep appearing on the table long after all real interest in Christmas puddings has faded.

Well, if I may make a suggestion, I would say : " What about wedges ? "

It will be found that a thin slice thrust under an ill-fitting door or poked in the side of a loose window will go a long way to make the home more comfortable during the New Year.

Other uses to which this cool, hard-wearing, resilient substance may be put are these :

A cold compress for headaches.

Sound-proof inter-wall lining for flats and telephone-boxes.

A substitute for mahogany.

Ballast for balloons.

Near-asbestos.

Saddle-weights for jockeys.

Caulking for yachts.

An " iron ration " for troops.

Incidentally, when whittling small pieces with a penknife, always cut *away* from you. Remember—Safety First.

* * *

I will conclude this short survey of the English Christmas pudding with just a word of advice to those readers who wish to treat it solely as a food.

When served with a hot bit, squeeze it thoroughly with your fork, thrusting the solid residue on one side. Then slightly tilt the plate and carefully drink the intoxicating liquid with a spoon.

I wish you all a very happy Christmas, boys and girls, and plenty of " good huntin' " under the mistletoe.

For those readers who wish to treat it solely as a food "

"How about swinging the next number, Dorothy?"

The Perfect Scream

By Walter Brooks

Illustrations by S. R. Badmin

ONCE there was a man named George Hardware and he was quite a card. He was great on jokes and when he went to parties his pockets were always full of tricks and he wore a nosegay in his buttonhole that when you smelt of it squirted water in your eye and he had another little thing you looked through to see Parisian Pictures that left black on your face and he had two badges he used to put on. One said KISS PERMIT and the other said GARTER INSPECTOR. Everybody laughed when he began to cut up and said O that George Hardware! And any girl he took to a party was sure to have a pretty jolly time.

Well there was a girl named Gladys Hibbard that he liked pretty well and she liked him too but she was engaged to Henry Wilt who wore dark blue neckties and worked in a bank. Henry did not like George Hardware because it began to be that whenever he went to see Gladys George was there and George played tricks on him and made Gladys laugh. And one night when George had given him an exploding cigarette he got mad and he said God damn it George! Are you trying to make a monkey out of me? And George said Why Henry that would be impossible! And Gladys laughed and laughed. And so Henry went home.

But Gladys's mother who was quite a lot older than Gladys had heard it and she came in and said Gladys I will not allow that young man to come here if he is going to use profane language. So Henry was in wrong all round.

Well Gladys was really a nice enough girl though she laughed too easily and next day she called up Henry and said I am sorry I laughed Henry dear but you did look so funny. Please forgive me. And Henry said O that 's all right. And as soon as Gladys knew it was all right she got mad herself and she told Henry off for getting mad. And she said The trouble with you is you haven't any sense of humour. And Henry said Well if a sense of humour means I ought to laugh at that clown George Hardware I 'm glad I haven't. And Gladys said Well you didn't have to swear. And Henry said O pshaw! because that was all he could think of. But Gladys said You may say O pshaw! as much as you want to but George Hardware is a good friend of mine and you have got to be nice to him. And so Henry said he was sorry some more and when Gladys thought he had apologised enough she said Well we won't say any more about it this time.

After this things went on about the same but Gladys kept picking at Henry for not having a sense of humour. She said I know George does go too far sometimes but he *is* funny and yet when everybody is just in stitches you do nothing but sniff and sneer. And Henry promised to do better.

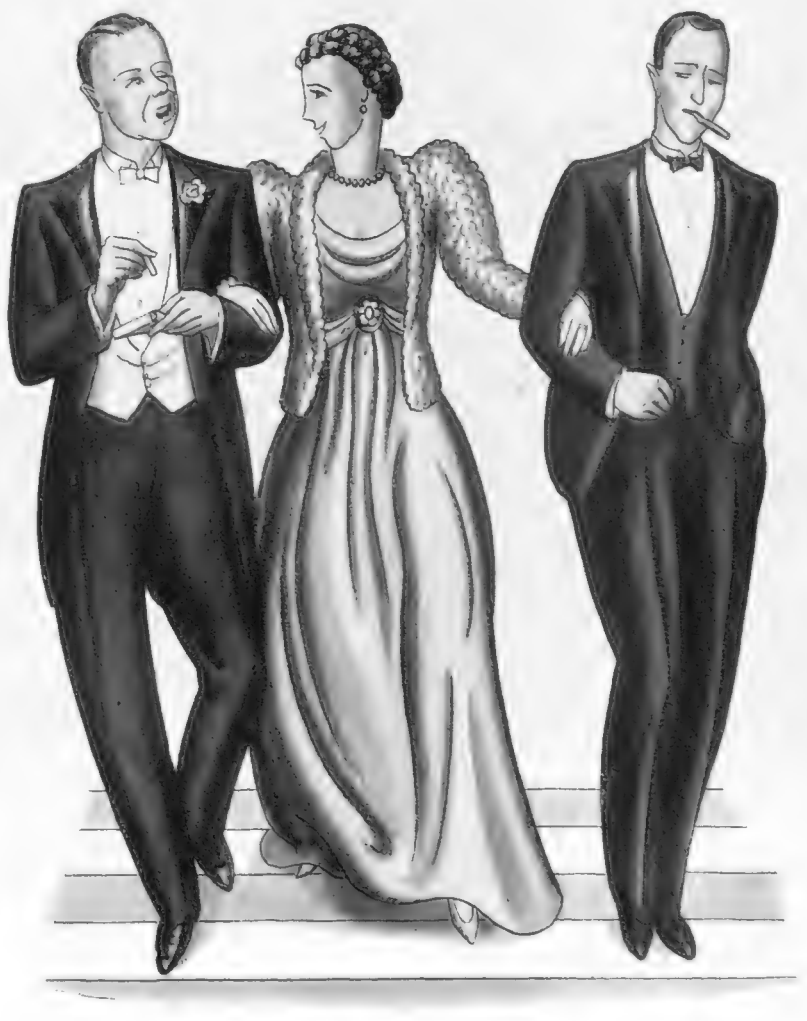
Well one night Henry came to take Gladys to a big party at the Cluetts' and when he got there George was there too. Gladys said George hasn't got a girl to take so I thought it would be fun to all go together. Some fun! said Henry. O there you go again! said Gladys. And she took Henry aside and said Now look here Henry Wilt. I 'm sick and tired of your grouchiness and if you can't be nice to George you needn't go. O all right said Henry. O gosh! said Gladys. I wish you 'd show some sense of humour and enter into the fun a little. What pleasure do you think it is for me to drag a load of gloom like you around? Gosh! If you 'd make a joke just every three months it would be something!

Well Henry looked at her hard and he said You want me to make jokes like George does? You couldn't be funny like George said Gladys. But if you 'd only just try once in a while. All right said Henry. I 've watched George for a long time now and I can't see that it takes much to be a smart Aleck but if that 's what you want O.K. And he laughed heartily for the first time in two months and said I know George is a card and a good one but I 'm the big casino baby. And Gladys said George is a real joker. And Henry said Yes and I 'm only a two-spot but deuces are wild to-night my love. And he laughed again sort of low and menacingly.

Well Gladys looked at him doubtfully but she didn't say anything and they went back to George. George held Henry's coat for him and when the right arm was in he held the sleeve so Henry's left arm wouldn't go through. Henry was good-natured about it and he laughed and struggled and in their fooling his left elbow went back and hit George in the stomach and knocked the wind out of him. George was kind of mad but Henry said he was sorry and it was just an accident and so they started.

On the way Henry kept tipping George's hat over his eyes and George said Hey! What is this—a game? And Henry said No it 's not a game. I like to do it and he tipped George's hat again harder and it fell off. And when George bent to pick it up Henry walked into him and knocked him over. And stepped on the hat which was a derby.

Continued on page 18)



It would be fun to all go together. Some fun said Henry

Well they picked George up and brushed him off and Henry apologised and they all laughed and went on to the party.

Well the Cluetts were rich and always gave fine parties and everybody in West Gomorrah was there because that was where all these people lived. Mr. Cluett was President of the West Gomorrah Trust and Safe Deposit Co. where Henry Wilt worked. He was rather pompous but there was no harm in him. He greeted them and said How de do Henry ? and Well Gladys my dear and Ha George you rascal ! and George bowed comically and said Ha me noble host ! and everybody laughed. And Henry laughed too and he kept on laughing after everybody else had stopped and he haw hawed and slapped George on the back and then laughed some more. And finally George said Say shut up will you ? What 's the matter with you ?

I can't help it said Henry. Haw haw ! You 're so darn funny ! O stop it Henry ! said Gladys and Mr. Cluett said Well he isn't as funny as all that and Henry said Well he is to me. And he laughed harder than ever.

So George said Come on Gladys and they walked away from Henry and went into another room. Henry stayed and talked to Mr. Cluett a minute and then he went after them. George was bowing and making funny speeches to everybody and Henry went up and stood beside him and kept looking at him expectantly and whenever George said anything Henry would laugh much louder and longer than anybody else. He would roar and slap his leg and shout O George Hardware ! You will be the death of me ! And when George at last began to get mad and gave him a push and said O get away will you ? he only laughed harder and he turned to the rest of the people and said Did you hear what he said to me ? Did you get that ? and he threw himself into a chair and doubled up with laughter.

Well Henry kept this up some time and at first the other people were just annoyed with him for trying to spoil George's stuff but after a while they began to laugh a little too. Because they had all had jokes played on them by George Hardware but none of them had ever dared to play any on him. Even Gladys laughed a little but she took Henry aside and said Now Henry you must lay off George. A little of this is all right but enough is enough. But Henry said I can't help it Gladys. You have always told me how funny George was but I never realised until to-night and all at once it came over me and now I see how funny he really is. Well she said let 's go in the other room and dance. So they did.

Well George had got pretty flustered but as soon as Henry was out of the room he got back into his old form again and he got off two or three dandies and then he thought he would go in and dance. So he went and cut in on Henry and he and Gladys danced off together.

So Henry went and sat on a chair and watched them. Every time they came around near him he would look at George and rock back and forth on his chair with laughter and he would point George out to people near him and say Did you ever see anything funnier than that in your life ? Why he 'd make his fortune on the stage.

So pretty soon George and Gladys stopped dancing and came over to him and George said Say what is the matter with you anyway you clown ? And Gladys said Stop it will you ? George isn't trying to be funny. He doesn't have to ! gasped Henry. It 's just natural for him ! I expect he can't help it. O is that so ? said George angrily. Well we 'll soon see who 's funny ! and he slapped Henry's face.

Everybody had stopped dancing and crowded around them and most of them had been laughing but when George slapped Henry everybody said O ! Mr. Cluett came up and said Now now boys. No disturbance if you please. But Henry just went on laughing and said It 's just one of George's pranks Mr. Cluett. He does think up the funniest things ! And then everybody looked expectantly at George for one of his famous comebacks. But George gave a sort of suffocated grunt and pushed everybody aside and rushed out of the room.

Well Gladys was pretty peevish. She was sore at George for slapping Henry and at Henry for riding George. So she decided she wouldn't have anything to do with either of them for a while and she went and danced with Freddy Cluett who had an impediment in his speech but was a good dancer.

By and by George came back from the porch where he had been smoking a cigarette and he had on a false moustache and a red ribbon across his shirt-front and he pretended he was a French count who wanted to fight a duel with Henry and he tried to cut up the way he always did but it wasn't very successful and it was only when he started to sit down and Eddie Finch pulled the chair out from under him so he sat on the floor that anybody laughed. And he didn't do anything to Eddie but swear at him.

(Concluded on page vi)

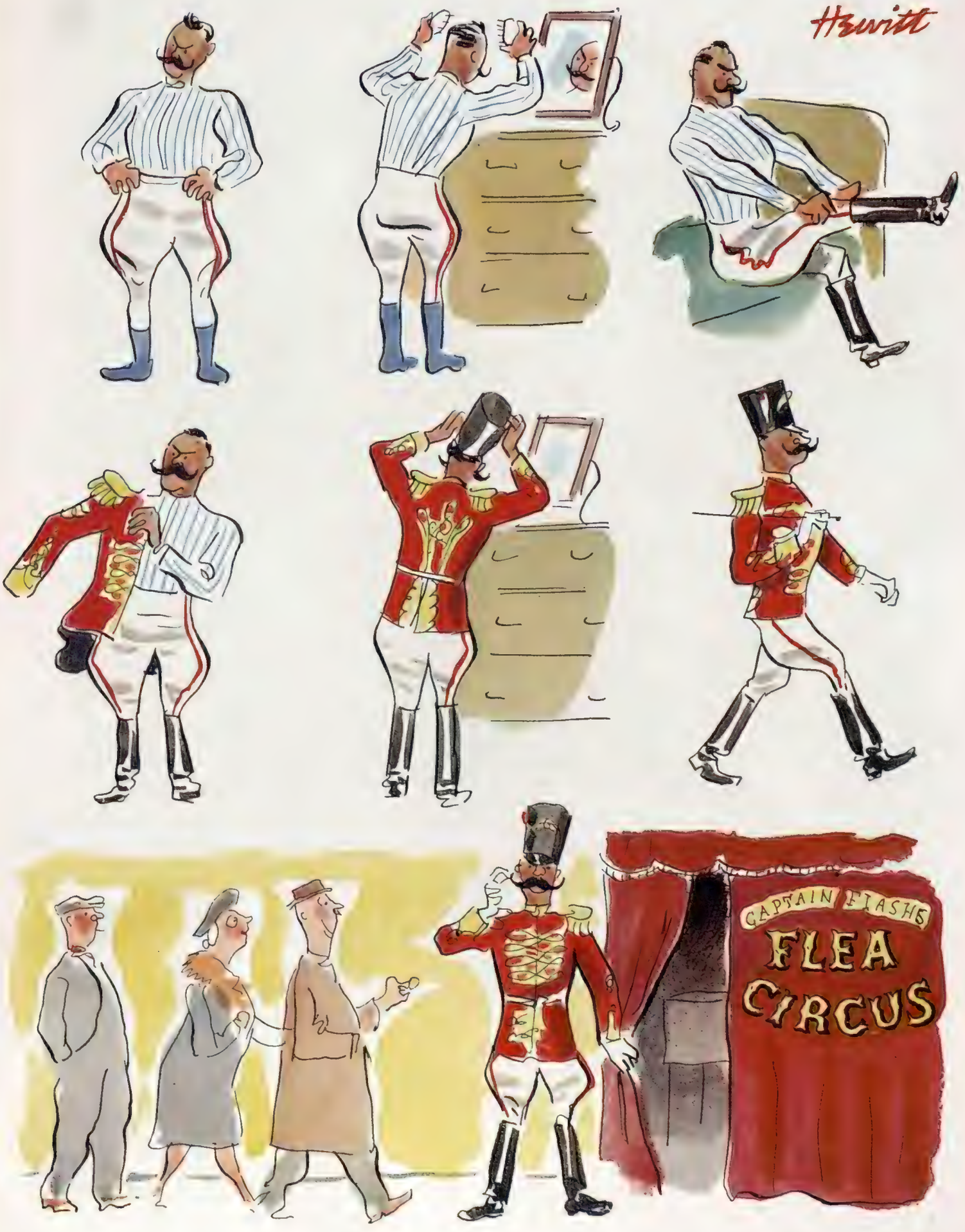
It was only when Eddie Finch pulled the chair out from under him that anybody laughed

Genuine Scotch!

"For Christmas — my Dewar's"

"White Label"

The Dignity

of Labour

It's a way they have at

CHRISTMAS...

to get the party well 'lit up'

by giving

GREYS

CIGARETTES

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Greys sales are always mounting—
It's the quality that's counting!

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"Hullo, I see Chelsea won again"

Crooner's Moon

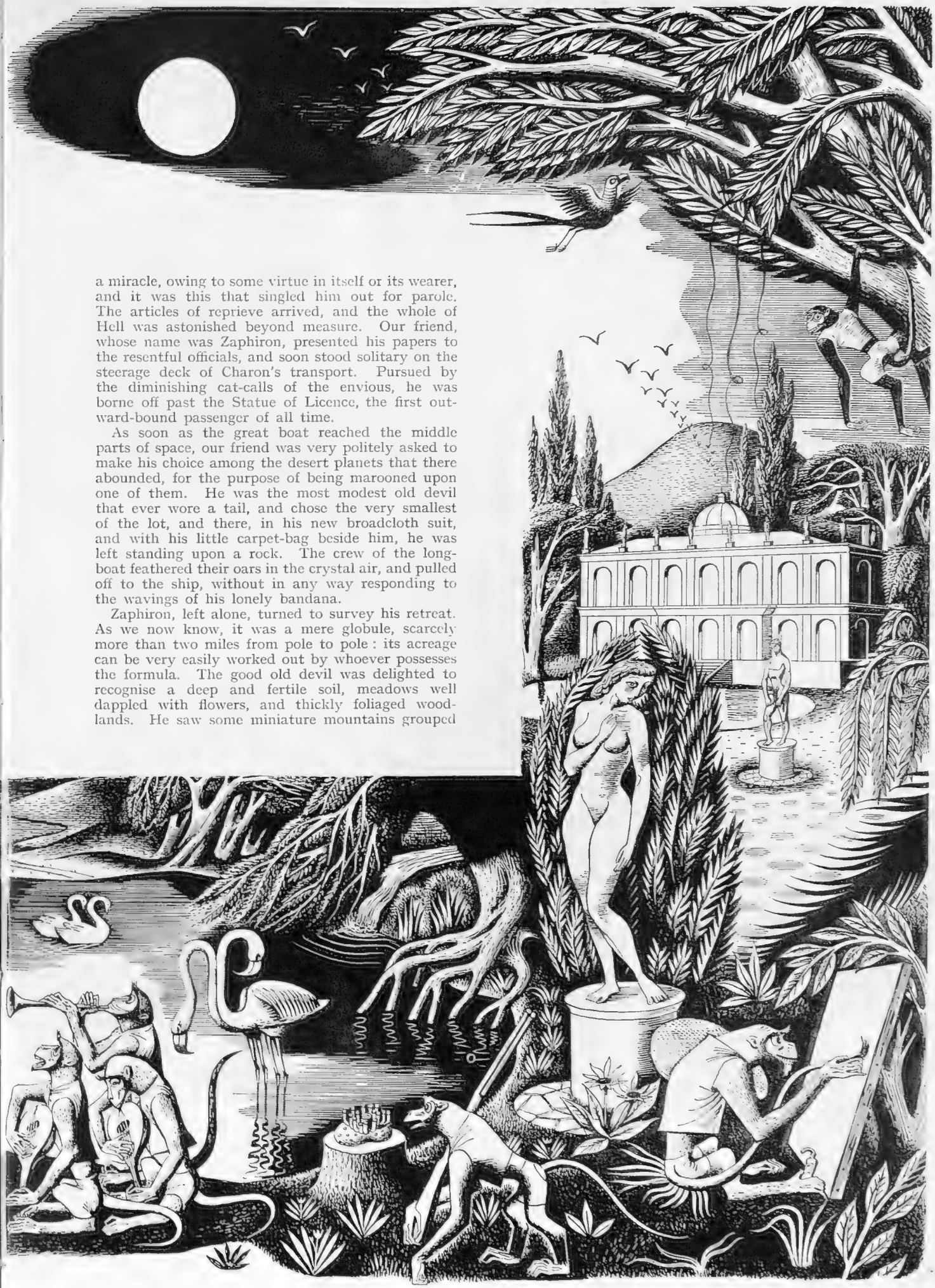
By John Collier

Decorations by Eric Fraser

THE small planet which passed so close to the earth at the end of last October was not, as the scientists carelessly assumed, uninhabited. Quite the contrary: it was the residence and private estate of a retired devil, the first of all the hellish host to be set at liberty. He was accorded this early release by reason of the obscurity of his station and the benign simplicity of his nature.

He was a gardening devil, and wore a straw hat. A good deal of subtlety and taste is needed to make any sort of display in the lower regions, owing to the deficiencies of the climate and the brimstone poverty of the soil, but in a gardener these qualities can combine with a rustic good nature and innocence. Our devil, therefore, moving with his master, Lucifer, at the time of his fall, knew nor cared nothing about what lay behind it all, and potted his pansies in the hot-houses of Hell as keenly as he had planted his lilies in the parterres of Heaven.

His straw hat survived as if by

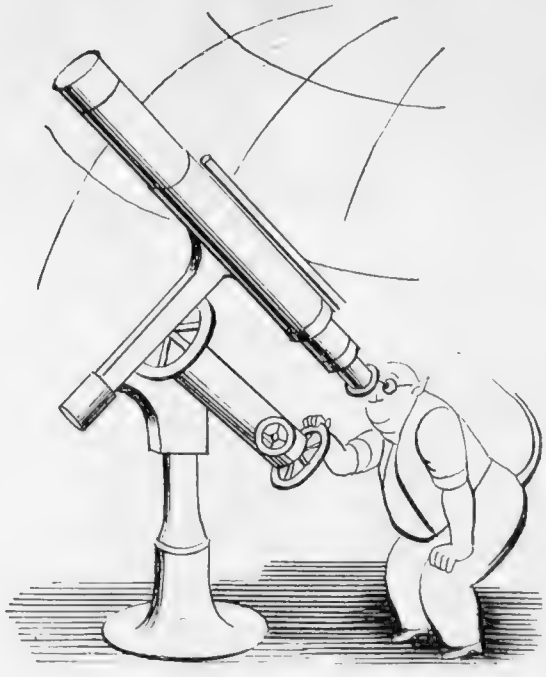


a miracle, owing to some virtue in itself or its wearer, and it was this that singled him out for parole. The articles of reprieve arrived, and the whole of Hell was astonished beyond measure. Our friend, whose name was Zaphiron, presented his papers to the resentful officials, and soon stood solitary on the steerage deck of Charon's transport. Pursued by the diminishing cat-calls of the envious, he was borne off past the Statue of Licence, the first outward-bound passenger of all time.

As soon as the great boat reached the middle parts of space, our friend was very politely asked to make his choice among the desert planets that there abounded, for the purpose of being marooned upon one of them. He was the most modest old devil that ever wore a tail, and chose the very smallest of the lot, and there, in his new broadcloth suit, and with his little carpet-bag beside him, he was left standing upon a rock. The crew of the long-boat feathered their oars in the crystal air, and pulled off to the ship, without in any way responding to the wavings of his lonely bandana.

Zaphiron, left alone, turned to survey his retreat. As we now know, it was a mere globule, scarcely more than two miles from pole to pole : its acreage can be very easily worked out by whoever possesses the formula. The good old devil was delighted to recognise a deep and fertile soil, meadows well dappled with flowers, and thickly foliaged woodlands. He saw some miniature mountains grouped

Stood solitary on the steerage deck of Charon's transport



He would sigh and pad upstairs to his telescope

about a middle sea, scarcely larger than a nobleman's lake; flamingoes and pelicans congregated noisily in the shallows, while the middle waters formed a playground for saurians of exceptional size and interest. The honest fellow, who loved nature, was delighted to see that the woods of this miniature littoral were agreeably confetti-ed with tanagers, hornbills, birds of paradise, and, above all, parrots—he had long desired a parrot; while on the other side of his private planet the more temperate uplands obliged him with the thrillings of larks, the warblings of blackbirds and thrushes, and the comforting companionship of the robin-redbreast, who follows the spade.

Another pleasing feature, to return to the warm woods of the lowlands, was the presence of a number of charming beings, who frisked and chattered among the branches of the trees. These were shaped very much like gibbons, but even more gracefully; they were covered with a soft and silver fur, and their eyes were brighter than rubies. Our friend, who, simple and benevolent as he might be, was none the less a devil, was not long in ensnaring and taming some of these idle hedonists, and soon, by a mixture of caressing and feeding, and above all, by giving them pet names, he had them persuaded there was no greater felicity in all their little world than to serve a retired devil and wear a silver chain.

Pretty soon he had chosen the site for his modest mansion, which he designed in the Palladian style, and he laid out some ten acres of formal grounds, and another fifty of pretty little groves and wildernesses. His charming apes, who proved to be astonishingly deft and willing, quickly opened up a quarry of peach-coloured marble, and his house soon glowed among its gardens and its woods. Other apes made him a shallop to glide over the waters of the lake that mirrored the calm façade; some, proving inventive, supplied him with a pair of guns that might have been made in Bond Street; some wove silks and tapestries; some, with chatter and bird-call, lugged in the blushing clusters from the native vines, whose juices were at least equal to our best burgundies and clarets. Finally, one of them, whose idleness had gone unreproved because it was so exceptional, roused himself at last and slouched into the woods, from which he emerged bearing a landscape in the manner of Poussin, entirely painted with the tip of his tail.

No words can possibly convey the contentment of our genial and deserving old devil, who saw his gardens improve every season, and whose soft-footed domestics vied with one another in bringing him cups of this or that, and boxes of the most excellent cigars. He had his parrot: this parrot was the most gifted of its kind—finger-tame, could talk, laugh, sing, dance, whistle—an A 1, all-round bird.

All devils are intelligent, even the very humblest. Zaphiron not only took delight in the arts, he also chose to dabble in the sciences. But, being a devil of taste, he did so only in the good, old-fashioned and gentlemanly way. He had his magnifying-glass, and his cabinets of shells and oddities, and above all, his telescope, which was mounted in the cupola of his Palladian hall.

He spent a long time devising a means of propelling his little planet along any course he chose. Eventually he discovered a ray which he used as a single paddle is used over the stern of a round coracle, and thus equipped at one stroke with the means of propulsion and steering, he visited Neptune, Jupiter, and might, had he thought of it, have spent a week-end on Venus.

It may well be wondered why, being so well-fed and comfortably looked after, he should not have thought of making this last little excursion. Consider, however, the inevitable innocence of one whose experience had been limited to the bodiless joys of Heaven, and to the joyless bodies of Hell.

Nevertheless, it is possible to feel the effects of an instinct without in the least realising its true nature, as the young woman testified in the old book, who had been told she was putting the devil back into hell. The fact is that our devil, surrounded as he was by all the appurtenances of a positive little paradise, ran some danger of being put back into hell by an excess of wistful, uncontrollable and even agonising longing which came upon him in the evening of the day. At such times he would sigh fit to break your heart, and pad upstairs in his carpet slippers to where his telescope stood mounted, and there, devoured by a nostalgia for he knew not what, he would rake the wastes of space all unavailingly and sigh more than before.

It was on one of these evenings that our honest devil was astonished to see the eye of Professor What 's-his-name staring at him through a telescope almost as powerful as his own. It may be asked why the Professor did not see Zaphiron's eye: the answer is that our modern telescopes bring things so appallingly near that the Professor winced back his head as if in hope to avoid a blow from the two-mile planet he saw advancing on him with terrific speed. By the time he looked again, the angle had changed, and Zaphiron was wheeling outward on a vast curve. He had recognised the Earth, and had no desire for any sort of collision with it.

But, having sheered off like a frightened gull, he soon disciplined his fears by reason, and ordering all lights to be put out, and even commanding his attendants to close their ruby eyes, which glowed in the dark, he approached our earth again from the other side, slowly, darkly and

Sadie, perplexed among a dozen of new nightdresses

Carried her so prettily and so smoothly that she never even stirred in her sleep

cautiously, and no one who saw him thought anything more of it than that a cloud had blotted out the stars.

By some pretty steersmanship he fetched up quietly and easily in the neighbourhood of Dorcus, U.S.A., that rising city of the corn-belt, one building of which has risen to the height of twenty-three storeys, and is crowned by the pent-house where dwelt, with poppa and momma, the glamorous Sadie Tomkins, beauty queen of the campus of Dorcus University. Our good Zaphiron, with his eye to his telescope and his hand on his steering apparatus, drew up his little planet right opposite one particular lighted window in this pent-house: it was the window of Sadie's room, and Sadie, perplexed among a dozen of new nightdresses, for she was a spoiled child, afforded such a sight to this poor, lonely, hungry old devil as caused his little beady eyes very nearly to burst from their sockets, and his heart to thunder like a drum.

Pretty soon her light went out. Our friend, who had seen enough, gave one broad stroke of his propulsive beam and rocketed half a million miles among the constellations. Before the dawn had visited Dorcus he was jigging along the bright beaches of the Milky Way like a spaniel dog gone crazy with joy.

Zaphiron, though he went so fast and so far, and warbled the news one hour to indifferent Sirius and the next to the unheeding Pleiades, retained the most precise memory of his bearings, and at the right moment turned earthward again, planning to approach our planet an hour after sunset in order to avoid causing a sensation.

While he steered and sang, his thoughts were extremely busy, and before he reached his destination he decided to restrain his impatience, and go ashore, as it were, for a night or two, in order to learn a little at least of the manners and customs of the world in which his divinity lived, in order that he might more easily please her when at last he had her for his own.

Accordingly, he dressed in an inconspicuous grey suit. His silver valet, with a fluid bow, ventured to insert an emerald pin into his necktie. He surveyed himself in the mirror with vast approval, for the salubrious airs of his little planet had softened his coal-black complexion to a hue more resembling that of elephant's hide, and he was at a loss to imagine any further improvement. His features were of aquiline cast, and marvellously good-humoured; he presented something of the appearance of the hinder parts of an elephant, supposing the hinder parts of an elephant to be capable of a love-sick smile. Or he might have been taken for a ponderous and wealthy Levantine, except that not even the wealthiest Levantine ever sported such an emerald

(Continued on page 74)

"Gee, this is the goods!" murmured Sadie

A few old rugs to peddle in the cafés –

Design for Christmas: with Apologies to a

The Lucky Man Who Hadn't Got a Friend: as H. M. Bateman might have drawn him

Prelude to the Feast: with acknowledgments to W. Russell Flint, R.A.

Quartette of Famous Artists: By J. H. Rouson

"Well, 'ere's to a connubial Christmas": after George Belcher, A.R.A.

Circus Christmas: with many apologies to Dame Laura Knight, R.A.

The Nosey Parker Café: by Anton

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2/6 *per tin (Enamelled tin)*

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1/6 *per tin (Enamelled tin)*

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1/6 *per tin (Enamelled tin)*

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1/6 *per tin (Enamelled tin)*

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2/2 *per tin*

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4/6 *per tin*

STORK ★
2/- *per tin (Enamelled tin)*

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Made specially to prevent sore throats

CARRERAS LTD - 150 YEAR'S REPUTATION FOR QUALITY

J.S. GODDALL 38
THE
CHRISTMAS
GIFT

The Old Gentleman Re-modelled :

Christmas comes but once a year, and with it the old-fashioned Santa Claus comes too. But *The Bystander* feels that an old gentleman of such importance should not be allowed to remain simply a traditional but meaningless figure and ought to reflect contemporary influences and ideas.

It therefore suggests that he might be re-created perhaps by MR. OLIVER MESSEL (as on the right)

or possibly (left) by MR. GEOFFREY LLOYD, M.P. (A.R.P.)

Nicolas Bentley drew the pictures

or even MR. JACOB EPSTEIN

New Designs for a Familiar Figure

By Nicolas Bentley

(Left) The influences of Fascism might be hinted at, or (right) LOW might be asked for his suggestions.

(Left) The advice of MADAME SCHIAPARELLI would be useful too

but to reflect the true spirit of the age Santa Claus would have to be surrealised by MR. SALVADOR DALI

Papa Joue Golf

PAPA va jouer golf : il a mis ses plus-quatres : il va aux chaînons.

Il arrive sur les chaînons.

Il prend sa personne qui pousse. Il brandit.

Il brandit trop vite : on entend un serment affreux ; il a coupé par tranches et sa balle va dans le rude.

On trouve sa balle dans le rude, mais, heureusement, il a une bonne mensonge.

Papa demande son fer, numéro deux. Encore il brandit.

Cette fois il a tiré. Encore un serment. Il est encore dans le rude de l'autre côté du beau-chemin.

C'est une mauvaise pendante mensonge, et un coup difficile. Papa prend son mêlé et frappe farouchement.

Il-y-a une silence terrible ; il a fait un coup d'air. Encore il essaye : cette fois il réussit. La balle va vers le vert.

Le vert est très rapide ; la balle passe au-dessus du vert. "Enfer !" dit Papa, "regardez-la. Elle court comme un chat échaudé."

Il a un autre coup. C'est un bon fragment ; la balle tombe presque morte.

Son adversaire est déjà sur le vert : il pose. Sa balle lèvre le trou ; elle tombe dedans.

Papa pose ; il est court.

"Jamais haut, jamais dans," dit son adversaire. "Mon trou. Un haut."

Papa ne dit rien. Il avait espéré obtenir un petit oiseau, si non un aigle. Mais il était deux au-dessus de fantôme. Papa arrache sa carte.

"Careful with that gun, Tomkins—it's loaded"

" You know my wisage ? "

Fireworks in December

By Celia Dale

WHEN Piers Latimer saw what had happened to the picture he was appalled, incredulous. It wasn't possible ; it must be some trick of light.

But it wasn't. High up in the right-hand corner of Cornelius van Huymer's famous picture of Venus hung a new and slightly leering cherub, upside down and eating a grape.

Piers gazed helplessly round him at his ancestors. A double row of them stretched down the panelled picture gallery, beruffed, beperiwigged, bepowdered, looking at him with his own Latimer grey eyes over his own Latimer square jaw. Beyond them, behind locked and bolted doors, lay the rest of the house, shut up for many years in order to save rates. A draught, thin and wintery as an old man's cough, blew along the gallery towards the lived-in wing to the room where Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg lay sleeping ; frightful Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg, who recognised masterpieces only by their pedigrees and their prices, and who was going to buy the van Huymer Venus.

At the thought of Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg, Piers, for all his broad shoulders in their shabby dressing-gown, felt weak. It was not only that Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg herself was frightful and her son Alister, who was flat and pale and despised any painter earlier than Picasso ; it was what Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg would say when she saw the Venus she had come to buy altered by the addition of this incredible cherub. She might refuse to buy it. And then—what would happen to the house, where young Sir Piers lived in half of one of the long, mellow brick wings and farmed his own fields in order that what had been in his family for four hundred years should remain in it still ?

Helplessly he looked up at the Venus again, and in spite of what she had done in the night, he still loved her. There she stood, plump and pearly and coy, leaning against a broken pillar round which curled a little vine. One pampered bare foot was crossed over the other, giving her stance a rakish languour, and between her toes an improbable little rose thrust its dewed petals. Although her head, its elaborate seventeenth-century ringlets bound by a string of coral, was turned towards the right, she peeped at you with a brown, cowlike coquetry which half-lifted the corners of her pouting mouth ; and her right hand, its arm shadowing but not concealing the gracious contours of her nakedness, held a ridiculous scroll which adequately but irrationally preserved the proprieties.

And now she had had a cherub.

Piers had felt something odd about her yesterday afternoon when Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg had come to look at her ; some unusual sense of life, some extra glow, had seemed to shine from van Huymer's Venus, so that the rest of the collection—the little Flemish interiors, the Italian primitive, the umbrageous landscapes and the big Danæ and Jupiter by Knollys, van Huymer's fashionable contemporary—had all seemed dull and muddy. Piers had put it down to a sudden rift in the December sky, which does sometimes let a little gold fall through its clouds to give the earth heart, and to the frightfulness of Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg and her son. He had gone to bed troubled and unhappy that to save so many lovely things

Nicolas Bentley drew the pictures

And now she had had a cherub

perhaps the loveliest of them all must be sacrificed to someone without a trace of appreciation, and had awakened suddenly with the feeling that something was happening. It was not the usual creaks and thumps with which an old house amuses itself at night that had awakened him. He lit the lamp, pulled on his dressing-gown, and went out into the wide passage, down the shallow staircase, into the gallery. And there it was—the cherub eating its grape, upside down over Venus's head.

Forgetting his anxiety for a moment, Piers studied it by the yellow lamplight. It was only a sketched-in cherub, hasty and unfinished, but it was gay and slick and full of character; it did give interest to what had, perhaps, been the least interesting corner of the canvas.

"D'you know," said Piers to the cherub, "I 'm not sure you 're not an improvement."

His words echoed down the dim panels of the gallery, but instead of fading out of hearing they seemed to turn back on themselves, to roll back along the gallery towards him, curdling and rumbling till his own words became other words, spoken in a rich Teutonic voice just behind him.

"But naturally it iss an improvement," said the voice. "I cannot paint what iss bad."

Piers turned. Immediately behind him, hands on hips, surveying the picture through appraising, half-shut eyes, was a red-faced man with long, curling hair to his shoulders, dressed in very dirty but rich seventeenth-century costume. He was hearty, handsome and quite transparent.

Smiling genially at Piers, he continued: "You think perhaps my Wenus iss for always the crown, the pearl of my great verks. And so she iss ontil I paint her again, by God!"

"I beg your pardon," said Piers faintly.

"You know me," said the man, his red face beaming between its curls. "You know my wisage—my self-portrait in the National Gallery. It is a good semblance, not? And you, you are all these peoples . . ." he waved round the gallery at the Latimer ancestors, and gave a large laugh. "From all these loins come the family face, by God! I know you, boy, and you know me."

"Van Huymer?" faltered Piers.

The ghost gave a low, swaggering bow. "Your servant, sir," he said.

Dazedly returning van Huymer's bow in a more modified form, Piers wondered why it should be not one of his own kin but the Flemish Court painter to King Charles whom he should happen on in this manner.

Van Huymer winked. "It is because I still must verk," he said, answering Piers' thoughts. "Your sires they haf finish with this place, but not myself. I vow I 've been at verk upon my Wenus for nigh on three hundred years, boy. I am never finish. Always there iss something my soul tells me I must improve. That 's your true genius," he added blandly.

"You 've been working on this picture for years?" asked Piers.

"By God, and how! (Mark how I speak now the new-fangled American tongue. I overhear it from you and your gallants sometimes.) Every night I verk, and every morning at the first touch of dawn what new I haf painted vanishes. Every night we are here, my Nell and I."

"Nell?"

Van Huymer nodded. "My Wenus, my fat Nally. I cannot paint from air! I would present you to her, boy, but that in these quaint prudish times she 'd not be thought decent. If you were to doff your gown, though . . ." He eyed the dressing-gown hopefully.

"Of course," said Piers politely. The gown came off astonishingly quickly, whisked itself across the gallery, and then, after a little flurry and agitation of the sleeves, swelled gradually and proudly over the curves of Venus. There she was, plump, exquisite, with her little pouting mouth and the string of coral in her hair, her pearly flesh, pearlier than ever now from some inner phosphorescence, casually concealed beneath Piers' old red dressing-gown. She gave him a pouting half-smile, drew the cord casually about her waist, and in a voice of exquisite Cockney, said: "Thanks ever so."

Van Huymer regarded her indulgently, hand on hip, head on one side. "Iss she not lovely?" he said. "Lovely and stupid like some beautiful cow. Queen of loveliness, loveliest of queens."

Venus pouted crossly. "Will you never 'ave done with that plaguish quip of yours?" she said. "'E 's but an ignorant Dutchman, sir," she continued, meltingly to Piers, sliding him deep, rich looks from her brown eyes. "'Tis a gentleman like yourself should be the judge whether I 'm well favoured or black."

"Go, go! Pleasure this place by quitting it"

Van Huymer patted her shoulder benignly. "A trollop," he said, "and no more wits than a new-fledged hedgehog. But she has Its, by God!" Then, after a further moment's contemplation, he turned his back on her in a businesslike way. "Enough of this," he said. "I haf a thing to say to you, boy. As I passed through this place during the forenoon you were displaying my picture to a hag. Ignorant and silly, she stared my masterpiece up and down as though it were some ill-bred beggar. It displeases me to haf my verk displayed to people lacking in discernment. Why do you do it?"

Piers flushed miserably. He had been wretched enough trying to satisfy his own conscience that the picture must go to Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg; he had never reckoned on having to satisfy its painter. But van Huymer must be told. It was the only honest thing to do.

"By God!" cried van Huymer, when Piers had done, clasping his long curls in a wild and furious gesture. "By God, it is a rape! A rape of Wenus by Mammon . . ."; he paused. "That would make a grand composition, not, with rolling flesh and draperies and over all, gold, streaming, like heat. . . ." But he shook himself back into his rage again. "It is a monster! I will not allow it! I will tell this Bagg hag where she comes off, by God! If it iss money, sell some other picture. These forbears. . . ," he waved an arm at the Latimers.

"They 're heirlooms," said Piers, shaking his head, "entailed."

"Then sell this daub," van Huymer stopped in front of Knollys' "Danæ and Jupiter" and shook a contemptuous finger at it. "This woeful misconception of iron draperies and wooden flesh, this unskilled bastard allegory daubed by a sign-painter. This . . . ," he paused and flung the word out like an insult, "this Knollys!"

"Don't you like it?" asked Piers, perhaps unnecessarily.

Van Huymer laughed a short, melodramatic laugh. "This Knollys was not an artist," he declared magnificently. "He comes not back to verk on his pictures, by God! No; each line, each niggling, unskilled touch iss perfect to him! And when it iss done he smiles and smirks and nods his wooden pate at it so—and says, 'This iss a masterpiece.' Not like van Huymer—van Huymer, who iss never satisfied, who verks and verks and verks always on his masterpieces. That iss true genius, boy." He paused, his passion eased, smiling a calm, complacent smile, hand on his satin hip, smoothing a curl from his ruddy forehead.

"'E never liked Knollys,' reflected Nelly, who, for some time, had been caressing Piers' muscular and pyjama-ed shoulder.

"But you see," said Piers, "Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg wants the Venus. . . ."

"I can onderstand it," agreed van Huymer graciously.

"She 's seen reproductions of it and she 's read about it, and she 's set on possessing it. And now——" he glanced anxiously at the newly painted cherub, "now I 'm afraid she may not want it—not with the cherub."

"But the cherub iss superb! Such gaiety, such innocent lechery! And the flesh—so rich!"

"Yes, *I* know. But Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg won't."

Van Huymer meditated. "You mean this Bagg she vill not take my Wenus to her huge, horrid mansion if my new cherub stays?"

"I 'm afraid not."

"The picture must remain here, not?"

"Yes."

"Then," said van Huymer, pleasure lighting his whole figure, "then I am happy. I verk vell here. I do not vish to go to a Bagg hag. I fix mine cherub—so!" And before Piers could stop him he had raised himself several feet off the floor, hovered on a level with the new cherub, and blew gustily at it. Coming to earth again, he beamed at Piers. "There," he said, "not even daybreak can move that, by God!"

"WHY," Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg asked her reflection in the dressing-table mirror the following evening, as she screwed enormous ear-rings under her gingerish shingle, "why had Sir Piers locked the door of the picture gallery?"

Mr. Penbury skipped with lighted match

She had been suspicious of him right from the beginning, because although she supposed there could be no doubt that he really was a "Sir," he had no money, and among Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg's friends only people with money had titles. And now he had locked up the picture gallery. Why?

Her sharp nose was an angry, suspicious question-mark as she dabbed powder upon it. She was suspicious of everything, even this shabby old house, full of draughts and good breeding, both of which made Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg very uncomfortable.

Why? Jingling crossly under a load of valuable and ill-chosen jewellery, she sailed seething down to dinner.

It was an uncomfortable meal, Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg suspicious; Alister bored; Agnes, the old servant, banging the dishes about because she disliked them both; and Piers making bright and wretched conversation. Only Mr. Penbury, the vicar, was happy, chattering benignly at them over the candles about his hobby—magic. He loved his hobby; it had kept him kindly through many a tiresome parish meeting. But, of course, not everyone was so interested, and with a startling inconsequence he beamed at Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg and asked: "And are you very happy over your beautiful purchase, dear lady?"

Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg's opportunity had come. She drew herself up and, glaring at Piers with a jangle of ear-rings, she said loudly: "I 'm not satisfied. I think it 's a fake."

"My dear lady!" cried Mr. Penbury in consternation.

"If it 's not a fake, why have you locked it up?" continued Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg, her voice mounting to a devastating clarity. "I think the whole thing smacks dangerously of false pretences. I shall certainly not part with one penny until I 'm satisfied!"

"Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg . . .!" cried Piers.

"It 's probably not a van Huymer at all," said Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg, "but some vulgar forgery not worth a penny."

At this outrageous utterance everyone paused, speechless. And in a silence which seemed at any moment about to topple over and destroy them all, the dining-room door burst open. Agnes, who had been listening there incredulously, was whisked aside, and van Huymer strode into the room, sword in hand.

"God's breath and bounty!" he roared, glaring round the table. "He dies who says so!"

When an angry ghost walks in on your dinner-party there is only one thing to do. Piers did it. Jumping up, he hurried between van Huymer and Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg and said: "Why, hallo, old man! We 'd given you up long ago!" Then, turning to his astonished guests, he said: "This is Mr.—Mr. Rumplestiltzkin, just dropped in on his way to a fancy-dress dance, haven't you, old man?"

Van Huymer was puzzled for a moment. Then a great comprehension blazed over his ruddy face. Tapping his nose twice with his forefinger, he gave a gigantic wink. "I haf you, boy!" he whispered like a hurricane. Then sheathing his sword with a clatter, he cried to the others: "Ho, ho! Am I not oldy-worldy?"

(Continued on page 49)

The Fireside : By Helen Mackenzie, R.O.I.

Two Action Paintings of the

"Les Sylphides"

One of the best books for ballet-lovers this Christmas should be *Tribute to Ballet*, in which the Poet Laureate has attempted to capture in verse the charm of the dance. Mr. Masefield sets himself a particularly difficult problem in doing this, for ballet, already a lyric in movement, is difficult to re-interpret into words. The

Ballet by Edward Seago

"Gaité Parisienne"

book is illustrated by numerous paintings by Mr. Edward Seago, two of which are reproduced here: one of Markova in Fokine's classic *Les Sylphides*, one of Tarakonova and Franklin in the new Massine romp, *Gaité Parisienne*. The latter was painted when the ballet had its world premiere in Monte Carlo last spring

Under the Big Top: from the pain

the painting by Bernard Ninnes, R.B.A., R.O.I.

The Dark Lady : By Anna Zinkeisen

This picture, which was exhibited in this year's Royal Academy, is in the City of Nottingham Museum and Art Gallery and is reproduced by permission of the Corporation of Nottingham

Lady in Red : By Suzanne Grotrian

Memories of the Sea : By Josephine H. Miller

Fireworks in December *(Continued from page 40)*

A flurry of conversation broke out round the dining-table, while van Huymer shook the curls back from his face and stared at Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg with melodramatic amazement. "By God, what loveliness! What glimmer!" he cried, clasping his hands to his silken breast. "Iss that not what our modern wenches haf, old man—glimmer, like filmed stars?"

Hurriedly Piers introduced everyone. Van Huymer bowed, then swung one booted leg over the chair beside Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg, sat down, and gazed into her face. She flushed slightly. "Wine!" said van Huymer dreamily. "Wine, for God's sake!"

"A fancy-dress dance?" said Mr. Penbury. "Now, why have I not heard of it? Who is giving it, if I may ask?"

"It slips my mind," answered van Huymer. "Before such glimmer my sense grows drowsy. Madam, as we moderns say—you are the tip!"

Alister, who had been goggling incredulously, here gave a short, hysterical snigger. His mother flushed again, and shifted her chair uneasily. "You 're not English, are you?" she asked resentfully.

"My soul iss English, my flesh Flemish," he replied. "Seeing that you are English, I would my flesh were too."

Piers coughed. "And how is your wife?" he asked meaningly.

"My vife? I haf no——. Ach, my fat Nelly! She blooms, I thank you."

"And about time, too," said Nelly crossly, appearing suddenly at van Huymer's side and scowling at Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg, who gave a faint cry. Piers, past grappling with anything but trivialities now, was relieved to see she was still covered by his old red dressing-gown. Alister, with more animation than he had ever shown before, took a gulp of wine.

Van Huymer shook his head ferociously at Nelly. "S-s-sh!" he whispered.

"I won't s-sh! There 's naught but lechery in that dirty 'ead of yours, no matter 'ow old a trull it may be!"

Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg made an inarticulate sound, while Mr. Penbury gazed at Nelly with a benign and brightening bewilderment.

"I tell you," cried van Huymer, jumping up, "this iss man's business, by God, girl! 'Tis for my bully Piers. . . ."

Nelly tossed her head scornfully, so that the string of coral in her hair quivered like a brilliant vein. "'Im indeed! I 'm not so silly as to believe a gentleman of 'is parts would be concerned with the dishonour of this old beagle!"

Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg rose. Her beaked face was white, save for two scarlet spots of rage on either cheek. Her voice was high and shattering; her ear-rings quivered. "It 's a plot!" she cried shrilly. "You 're all trying to fob me off with a forgery!"

"Haf a care, madam!" rumbled van Huymer.

"Care of what, you—you mountebank!" screamed Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg.

Van Huymer seemed to swell. His face grew dark and at the same time brilliant, like an autumnal sun. He grasped the hilt of his sword in a hand which shook with fury. "By God!" he said deeply. "By God, this iss too great! First you stare insolently at my Wenus; then I am told you 'll not admire my cherub—my cherub who iss of my most masterly skill! Then, because of the love I bear my Piers here, I stifle my distaste, deny the amorous and artistic discernment which marks my greatness, and I woo you! By God! I woo you like a dove, like an angel, like—like myself I woo you! And then you call me 'mountebank,' you say my Wenus is a forgery!"

Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg paled. "*Your* Venus?"

"Ja, my Wenus." He struck his breast proudly, and his curls bobbed with the proud lift of his head. "My masterpiece, my pearl, my proof of man's eternal greatness, equality with the gods. My Wenus, whereby my Nelly lives, warm and coy as when God's breath blew in her. My love of man, of woman and of God transfixed for all eternity!"

"Rumplestiltzkin. . . ." whispered Piers weakly.

"Nay, boy—van Huymer!" he cried splendidly, and the candles quivered in the arrogance of his breath.

Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg gave a shrill scream and fainted under the table.

"There, now," said Mr. Penbury mildly, "I thought it strange that I could see right through them."

Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg was borne to her bedroom amid a confusion of recriminations and restoratives. Van Huymer and Nelly, presumably abashed by what they had brought about, had vanished. "He would," said Piers bitterly, pacing the worn old floor of the dining-room. "He would vanish and leave me to clear up his muddles. Not that I can. She 'll never buy it now."

Mr. Penbury clucked sympathetically, but his eyes were bright with the brightness of a man within sight of a life's ambition.

"My dear boy," he said, and Piers saw he could hardly restrain himself from dancing with excitement, "I beg you to allow me to take this opportunity to test my theories of the magical properties of fireworks. I have them all at the vicarage: I keep a stock for just such an emergency. But this is the first time one has ever occurred. I beg you, dear boy, allow me to see what I can do in this direction!"

At this point the door opened and Alister came in, wan and frigid. "I don't suppose you 've any brandy?" he said. Piers hurriedly produced some. Alister took it without comment. Then: "Mother says we 're leaving first thing in the morning. The deal 's off, of course. She told me to tell you. I must say I think she 's absolutely right," and he went away again.

(Concluded on page 80)

"No, no madam—that means all in this box one penny each"

OLD FORD'S A.

JANUARY

The first few days after Christmas will be marked by a severe outbreak of Spotted Necktietis among the male population of Great Britain

FEBRUARY

A plot to pull the bung out of the Queen Mary will be discovered

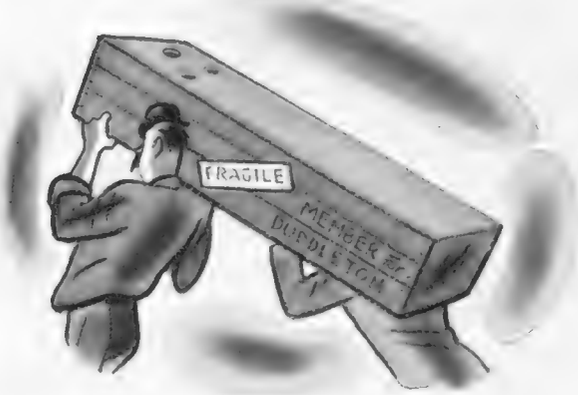
MARCH

Mutiny will mar the Boat Race. Two bandits disguised as members of the crew will rob their fellow oarsmen, getting away with a considerable sum of money

APRIL

Indignation will be caused to opera enthusiasts by the substitution of Donald Duck for the Wagnerian swan

MAY



The Houses of Parliament will be purchased by a New York syndicate and removed, member by member, to the United States

JUNE

The 1939 Derby will be run at Brooklands in conjunction with the chief motor racing event, thus combining two popular sporting fixtures

LMANACK for 1939

JULY

News-reel cameramen will be granted greater facilities in this year's Test matches

AUGUST

Japan will win the America Cup with a mass-produced, all-tin ocean racer driven by concealed clockwork

SEPTEMBER

World commerce will cease for three weeks during the redecoration of the Stock Exchange

OCTOBER

There will be a sit-down strike of pheasants which will seriously delay the opening of the shooting season

NOVEMBER

Two famous dignitaries of the Church will fight a duel in a Limehouse inn-yard

DECEMBER

The Government's tax on beards will cause serious Christmas rioting

"I've told you before, Higgins—the customers are only always right *sometimes*"

"Then, at the first warning of approaching enemy aircraft, I suggest we all meet here"

Heraldic Terms Explained

A pig expanded in pale

A bird passant trippant regardant

Sable charged

A pansy proper

by Patrick Bellew

Charged a crown or—

A dear couchant sinister

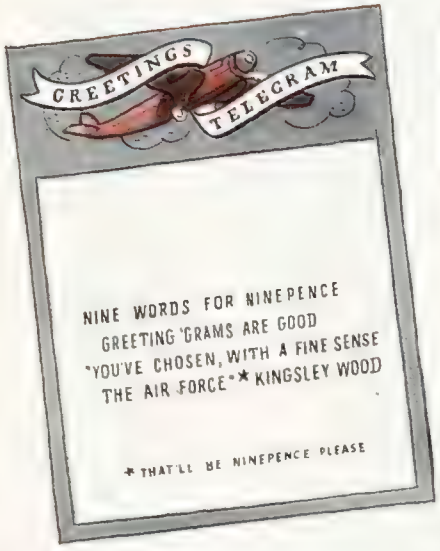
Supporters

A body vested in base undy on a sea azure proper

A missionary in chief gorged with a plain collar

Belisha Blandishments: By Hewitt

SPECIAL GREETINGS TELEGRAM TO BE SENT TO EACH NEW RECRUIT AT CHRISTMAS

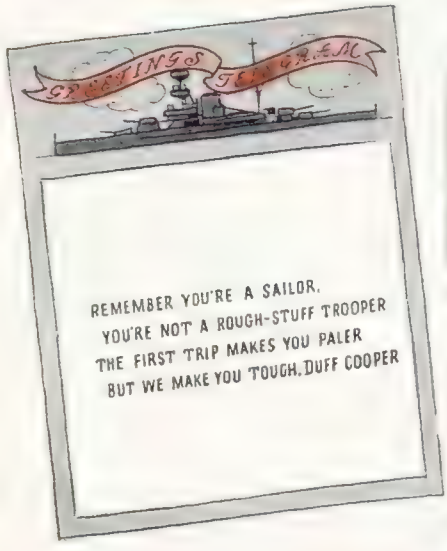


OLD REGIMENTAL MASCOT

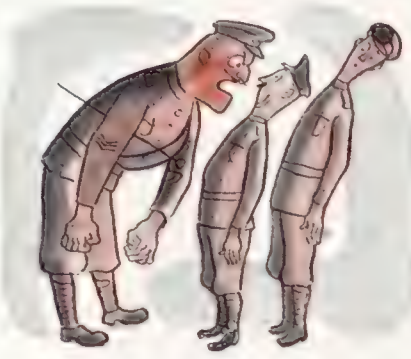
THE BULL DOG AND THE BILLY GOAT
WEAR A REGIMENTAL COAT.
BEING PRIZED POSSESSIONS,
THEY'RE ALLOWED IN THE PROCESSIONS

NEW REGIMENTAL MASCOT

THOUGH ANIMALS ARE GOOD CLEAN FUN,
WE RATHER FELT MORE COULD BE DONE:
THE SOLDIERS ARE MUCH MORE IMPRESSED
WITH CHORUS GIRLS (DISCREETLY DRESSED)



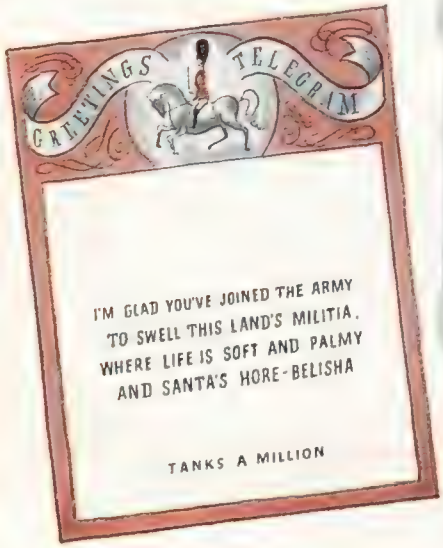
OLD SERGEANT



THE POPULAR CONCEPTION
OF THE SERGEANT'S WARM RECEPTION.
BUT UNDERNEATH INFLATED CHEST
IS THE MAN, IN ARMY VEST

NEW SERGEANT

SERGEANT COMES AROUND EACH NIGHT,
TUCKS YOU UP, TURNS OUT THE LIGHT,
KNEELS AND PRAYS BESIDE EACH BED,
KISSES FOR EACH SLEEPY HEAD



OLD RECRUITING OFFICER

STANDING OUTSIDE OFFICES
RAKING IN THE NOVICES
HAS NEVER SEEMED TO US QUITE RIGHT—
(DON'T TAKE A MAN IF HE IS TIGHT)

NEW RECRUITING OFFICER

A METHOD THAT IS MORE UNIQUE
EMPLOYS A MASTERLY TECHNIQUE—
TAKING LEAD FROM RECENT POLLS
WE COLLECT YOU IN A ROLLS

What is Christmas without
Santa Claus
and what is Santa Claus without
MARTINI
?
DRY
MARTINI
MARTINI
Good Health and Good Cheer in abundance await you with Martini Vermouth
Martini Vermouth Sweet
4/6 per large bottle
Other sizes 3/6 and 2/-
Martini Vermouth Dry
5/6 per large bottle
Half bottle 2/9
From Wine Merchants Everywhere
CHIANTI MELINI
LIXY
LACRIMA CHRISTI
MARTINI
VERMOUTH
LOOK FOR THE NAME MARTINI & ROSSI

If you left it to me

I would always choose

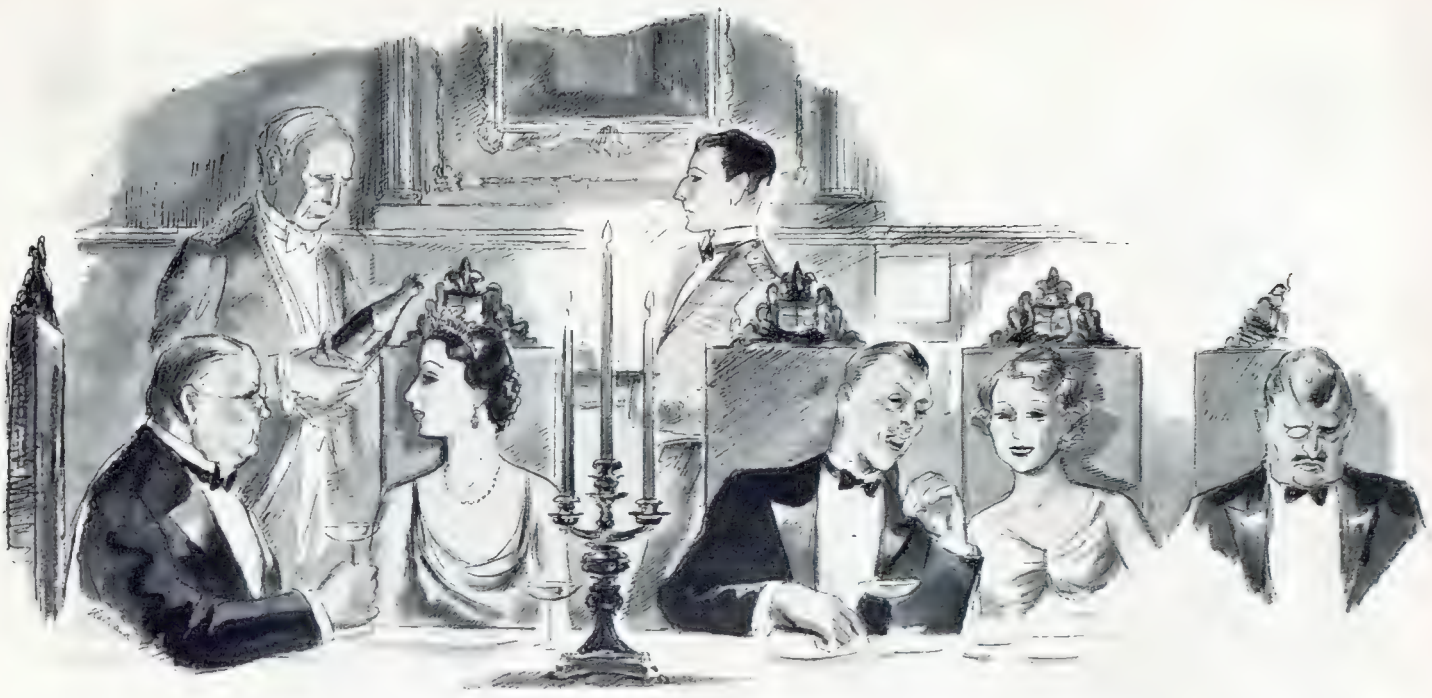
Mackintosh's

TOFFEE CHOCOLATE ASSORTMENTS

—for there's something nice for Everybody!

Packed in Fancy Boxes for Christmas at 6d., 1/-, 1/6, 2/-, 2/6 and 4/- to 10/-.

Write for Illustrated List to JOHN MACKINTOSH & SONS. LTD., Toffee Town, Halifax, Eng.



The scene presented a faultless reproduction of English Christmas cheer in its accepted form

Metamorphosis

By Martin Hawkin

Illustrations by Holland

"DOES anyone know who Mr. McGill really is?"

"What do you mean—really is? No American really is anybody. They all come out of the melting-pot."

"I mean, where did he come from?"

"I believe he said Texas, or was it Arkansas?"

"I thought he said Illinois: or do you pronounce it 'Illinwaa'?"

"And I always thought Illinois—or waa—was purely agricultural, so how could he have made a fortune out of hairpins? Bobby, you know all about America."

"Well, you 're right. It is Illinois and it is hairpins."

"We know it 's hairpins. I use his make myself. What extraordinary things Americans make fortunes out of!—chewing-gum, nail-files, baked beans, razor-blade sharpeners, hairpins."

"It 's because the place is so big that if you once corner a market, however specialised, you 're made for life. That part of him 's real enough."

"I know it is. Jane Spode showed me the cheque he wrote her husband."

"Oh? How much was it?"

"Two thousand one hundred."

"By George! Two thousand guineas for renting this mausoleum for Christmas!"

"Apparently Lord Spode said to him, 'I 'm awfully sorry, Mr. What 's-your-name, but I 'm so poor I just can't afford to move out under a couple of grand.'"

"I suppose none of you are being paid to stay here, are you?"

"I wish to God I was."

"Well, it looks like being a jolly time. We all know each other, and there are electric fires in all the bedrooms. We must try not to make our host feel too much out of it."

"I ask you!"

"He took the place furnished, I suppose?"

"Lock, stock and barrel. That is, except the portrait of Sheila in the dining-room. That he brought with him."

"How on earth did he get a portrait of you, Sheila?"

"It was done by Rufus Brett."

"Clever chap! Those Americans manage to be art connoisseurs simply by being business men. He must know Bretts are rare and are rising steadily in value. The fellow only painted about twenty before he disappeared."

"I know."

"Sorry, Sheila. I forgot."

"Well, it was a great surprise to me. I think you looked marvellous then, dear."

"Thank you, darling."

"Well, my opinion of Mr. McGill——"

"Why, Mr. McGill, at last! We 've been wondering whether you drowned in your bath."

The host came down the remaining stairs and crossed the hall to the group standing by the fire. His chubby face shone above a brand-new dinner suit of faultless cut, and he seemed happy about everything.

"Where are the other folks?" he said.

"Perhaps they 've drowned in their baths," said Sheila, a woman who bore her forty-six years with the ease of anyone whose bill at the beauty specialist's is so large that they worry no longer about it.

"Oh, I hope not, I hope not," said Mr. McGill, putting emphasis on the negative participle and pronouncing it "naht."

When the other Christmas guests at Spode Castle had appeared the party of twenty went in to dine. Over the mantel hung a full-length portrait of a girl, dressed in the fashion of the nineteen-hundreds. The rest of the walls were covered with tapestry or old arms on which the firelight shone redly. A rich meal of many courses began, and the scene presented a faultless reproduction of English Christmas cheer in its accepted form. Mr. McGill sat at the table's head and beamed.

"I hope you don't find it indelicate of me to hang your picture here, Lady Mount," he said to his neighbour. "It is the finest Brett in existence and I am very, very proud not only of owning it but of having its original as my guest."

"Oh, Mr. McGill, you are too kind! I 'm afraid the original is hardly up to the painting."

"Now pray don't embarrass me, Lady Mount, for you know I can't rise to the proper compliment on these occasions. John, fill her Ladyship's glass, please."

Further down the table they were saying: "Of course, it 's too bad for poor Sheila Mount having that portrait of her hung there. It was painted about 1908, you know."

"She must have been sixteen or seventeen then. I don't know why she accepted this invitation."

"Why did any of us, for that matter?"

"You know she 'd go anywhere where Bobby Radclyffe was."

"Sh, my dear! His wife is two away from you."

And at another corner they were saying: "Brett simply disappeared before

the war. Simply disappeared one fine day, and just as his reputation was beginning to bud."

"And, of course, you know why? Because Sheila married that awful Lord Mount. Brett was wildly in love with her."

"Ancient history, mon chéri. Brett was killed in the war, wasn't he?"

"I believe so, I say, this Hock is good! It must be Lord Spode's."

"No wonder he asked three thousand guineas rent."

"Good God! Is that the figure?"

"Absolutely. Mary saw our host's cheque."

"Well, I must get him to take Chetham Abbey for Easter."

A big man who had spent forty years at the task of dissipating a fortune piled up by his grandfather leant across his neighbour and said:

"I say, Sheila, you knew the chap who painted that picture of you, didn't you? Tell us something about him."

"Yes, I wish you would, Lady Mount," said Mr. McGill.

"Well, what do you want to know about him? What colour his eyes were?"

"That 'll do for a start," said the big man, dropping some bread sauce on the tablecloth.

"As a matter of fact, I don't remember. But I know Rufus Brett was vrai artiste. He once gave a still-life to a fishmonger's boy who admired it. While I was sitting to him."

"And now Bretts fetch thousands. Well, I 'm damned!"

"He asked me to marry him," said Lady Mount.

"God! I never knew that," said the big man.

"You 're the only person in the world who didn't," said his neighbour.

"As a matter of fact, Mr. McGill," continued Lady Mount in a lower voice, "he was, in a way, my first love."

"You don't say!"

"Yes: we were to be married. For a whole year. But you know how it is. An artist for a secret fiancé to a girl of seventeen isn't the same thing as an artist for a public husband to a girl of eighteen."

"You mean, you broke it off?"

"Yes. It was only a joke all along."

"But he painted that wonderful picture of you. It was his masterpiece, I have been told. There must have been some sympathy—some attraction between you to give him the force for that. Or, at least, that 's how I figure it."

"But, of course, there was attraction, my dear Mr. McGill. Didn't I say he was my first love? I remember how he always had paint in his finger-nails. I never noticed it for months, then one day it suddenly struck me. And after that I always seemed to be noticing things about him."

"This is most interesting."

"His clothes, you know, his manners, his mode of living. My friends used to laugh themselves sick about them. What could I do? I had to laugh, too."

"And so it all ended in laughter?"

"Now you 're trying to tear my beautiful dream from me, Mr. McGill. I won't have it."

"John, fill up her Ladyship's glass, please."

The big man was leaning across his neighbour again.

"I say, Sheila, he must have gone off with a broken heart when you married old Jack."

"Tell us something about your own love affairs, Henry," countered Sheila Mount. This subject never failed to produce a laugh, in which the big man always joined.

"I don't believe it 's love, myself. It 's just simple vanity. Have I ever told you why poor Charles Morfew gave up that French actress of his?"

"No."

"Haven't I ever told you that? Well, Charles was nuts about her—raving he was. He was offering her everything he had—money, title, all she could ask. He used to send her five sovereigns' worth of flowers every day. He used to offer to fight his rivals all at once. He used to offer the moon."

"So what?"

"So one day, in her dressing-room, there were four or five of us, all friends of his, and he was shooting the works, as usual. 'I 'll do anything—anything,' he said. 'Just give me some hope.' 'All right,' she says, and we sit up to hear this change of tactics. 'All right, darleeng,' she says. 'Go to that cupboard and you 'll find a red wig. Put it on, come over here, and stand on one leg for five minutes.' 'What?' says poor Charles. 'You heard me, darleeng. Surely you won't refuse such a little thing after all you 've promised?' Well, Charles thought a little, then he crept out and never came back. Vanity, that 's what I say. Shoot a lion, yes; but stand on one leg in a red wig, never."

The comparative length of this anecdote overcame the superficial conversation, and there was silence for a time while the servants cleared plates and wheeled round a trolley with cheeses and celery on it.

"It 's a human phenomenon that our scientists recognise," said Mr. McGill, "the desire to go off and shoot big-game when lovelorn. The old familiar atmosphere becomes so charged with dissatisfaction that the unrequited lover suddenly feels that he must get away from it all."

"My God! He 's off," whispered Bobby Radclyffe.

"I knoo a young painter once who had all the germs of success in him, but a love affair put him right off the rails. He oughtn't to have let it, but he was young and he had it badly. He ought to have realised his muse came before his mistress. But as he couldn't have the latter, he gave up the former out of pique. He transformed his life completely. He went into commerce and he made a big success."

"Amazing country, yours, Mr. McGill," cut in Radclyffe with a grimace round the table. "I say, Henry, tell us some more about your loves . . ."

The ladies left the room and Henry plunged into the suggested subject. Eventually all the diners departed to play billiards or to gamble in the drawing-room; the servants whipped off the remains of dinner in no time and went down to eat their own meal. Rufus Brett's sweetheart looked into the darkened room where she had been discussed.

It was after twelve when a chubby man came in and placed himself with his back to the long table, palms downward on it, and looked up at the portrait. A woman came in softly ten minutes later.

"Mr. McGill," she said, "that story of yours about the transformed artist: what business did you say he went into?"

"I didn't say, ma'am. But since you ask, it was hairpins."

"Was the transformation complete?"

"Almost com-plete. But I believe somewhere in his comfortable new being he was unwise enough to keep one ideal out of his past. He acted yellow there. If you start in to transform, you gotta transform." And Mr. McGill took down a fifteenth-century billhook from the wall and raked it once or twice across the canvas above the mantel.

THE END.

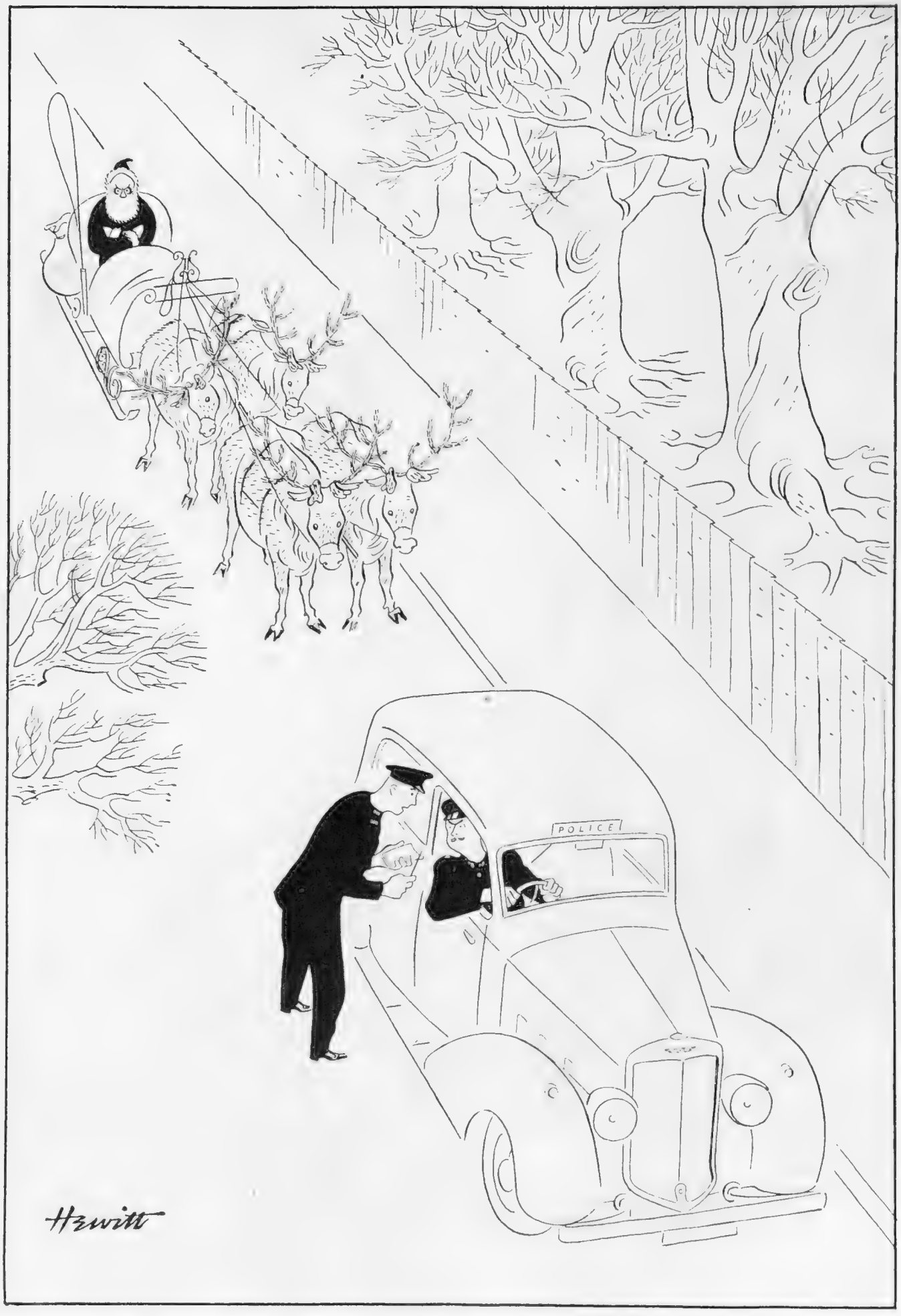
Hidden Thoughts: By Frank Ford

If I don't touch every sixth railing to the corner, I shall be dead by next Wednesday

If I left in ten minutes, I should just be in time for one at the Mitre

I mustn't read that letter—I mustn't *read that letter*

I suppose my shirt isn't *hanging out?*



"He says he was hurrying to his family of 2,000,000,008 children"

Bridge Terms : By Hendy

He cycled down to the station every night to meet his father

Harry's Bicycle

By Frank Tilsley

Illustrations by Tony Weare

HARRY'S bike was no ordinary bike. He saw it in the shop window one Christmas. They didn't usually look in the bicycle shop window in the winter, but Tom Martin's uncle was buying him a bike for Christmas, and as soon as they heard the news they all migrated down to the village to choose it for him.

The bicycle shop was very brilliantly lighted, and there were bits of cotton-wool dangling on pieces of thread to represent a snowstorm, and there was more cotton-wool on the window bottom and imitation holly all round the edge of the windowpane; and the window itself was all wet and streaming so that you had to glue your face to the glass to see what was inside. Billy Armitage said that was because it was hot inside the shop and cold outside, and as Billy was eight they all reckoned that he ought to know.

In the centre of the window Father Christmas himself, cut out of cardboard and almost life-size, was bending over the bicycle they all agreed, without any question, was the very best in the shop. It was red, and there were gold lines down it. There was a red pump, secured under the cross-bar. The tyres were proper tyres, the same as on a man's bike, not solid, like all the other lads' bikes in the road. The handlebars were so bright that the reflection of the shop lights in them almost dazzled them. There was a metal support at the back so you could stand it up properly instead of leaning it against things. And there was an electric lamp on the bracket at the front.

They were silent with awe at the wonder of that bicycle. Even Arthur Potter, who 'd told the teacher he didn't care when he 'd got the cane at school—even Arthur Potter was silent. Nobody who 'd got a bike had got a bike like this. Nobody who had hoped to have a bike had ever hoped to have one like this.

"It 's three pounds five," said Billy Armitage. "Mine was two guineas. That 's two pounds two."

"I don't suppose I 'll get *that* one," said Tom Martin, and Harry was abruptly and fiercely very glad, and he found that he 'd clenched his teeth and was hoping that somebody from the other side of the road, where the people with the motor-cars lived, would get that. He was standing behind two of the other boys—he always seemed to be standing behind the other boys—and he was glad they couldn't see his face. He knew he oughtn't to feel like that about it, but he just couldn't help it, and somehow he didn't want to help it.

It was just when Tom had decided his uncle might buy him the blue one with the black handlebars that Harry saw the second-hand one in the corner of the window. It had been enamelled over and some of the enamel had run, and there was rust on one of the joints of the brake; and the metal part that was bright wasn't very bright, and it was scratched in places. It was easy to see somebody else had had that bike, and it was that which made Harry perk up so quickly. Perhaps his father would buy it for him? All the things he 'd had

were like that—second-hand; they 'd all been used by somebody else first—his motor, the tricycle, his train-set. When things were second-hand he could have them; he knew that.

Harry was very thoughtful at tea-time. He wanted to speak about the bike, but he didn't like. Sometimes he said things which caused no end of trouble—his mother shouting at his father and his father shouting at his mother, and then his mother crying and his father stamping out of the house. You had to be careful. This seemed, somehow, like one of the things that might cause a bother.

And then his father himself brought it all out.

"Well," he said, leaning back in his chair so that it was balanced on its two back legs, "I see Father Christmas is at the stores. What 's it to be this time, Harry?"

Harry concentrated on the last piece of bread and jam and his father filled his pipe with tobacco.

"A bicycle," Harry managed to say at last. He ate stolidly away at his bread and jam, though he didn't want it a bit now. He could tell that his mother was looking at his father and his two elder sisters were looking at each other, but he suddenly felt defiant. He wanted a bike. Everybody in the road had a bike but himself and Jack Adams, and Jack was only four, so you couldn't count him really, could you?

"I 'm afraid it won't run to a bike, sonny," said his father. "You 'll have to think of something else. How about a fort, eh?"

"I want a bike," said Harry stubbornly, and there was a long silence.

"But, Harry," said his mother at last, "you don't want a bike at Christmas-time, do you? You have bikes in the summer. Perhaps you could have one for your birthday. Harry, look up at me," she said.

Harry didn't want to look up at her. He knew that there 'd be wrinkles all over her forehead and that her mouth would be pulled down in that funny way she had that he didn't like, and that he 'd have to say that he didn't want the bike. But he did want the bike. He 'd never wanted anything so much in all his life. He could ride a bike as good as anybody—better. Even Billy Armitage couldn't turn round on the pavement—he had to ride into the road. And he could ride from the lamp-post to the telegraph-pole without holding the handlebars. If he had a bike of his own, and didn't have to keep begging for rides off other boys, he 'd be better still. He 'd go to the village on it. Not, as the other boys did, on the pavement, but at the side of the road. It was quite all right if you kept close to the pavement, and the pavement was always on the side where your bell was. You 'd get off at the crossings, of course. And when you turned you put out your hand. He was dying to do that properly, when people were waiting to pass, and not just playing at it in the road.

He looked up at his mother. Her hair was soft and shining, just as he liked it: that meant she 'd just washed it. There was a nice parting in it.

"I want a bike," he insisted, looking steadily at her hair. "I don't want anything else."

There was another very long silence and then his father said he must have seen some special one somewhere and where was it? And Harry was suddenly very happy, and told him, and his father said all right, they 'd go out and have a look at it in a few minutes.

Harry couldn't contain himself when at last they banged the front door behind them and stepped out on to the pavement. He skipped and hopped and jumped until at last his father told him to "pipe down," but even after he 'd piped down he was still happy because he knew he was going to get the bike for Christmas.

The shop was warm when they finally pushed open the door and walked in, and it smelt like that time Tom's brother had had a puncture and they 'd all sat round whilst he put the tube in a bowlful of water, looking for the bubbles. He showed his father which bike it was, and when his back was turned Harry put out one hand and touched the saddle. He drew it back quickly, looking guiltily towards the window. He 'd forgotten people could see in from the outside. Then he stood watching his father and the man in the shop, talking. He couldn't tell what they said because there were other people in the shop and they were talking too, and his father wasn't talking very loudly, but he could tell by the looks on their faces that everything had gone wrong. The bike was too expensive.

When they were out on the pavement again his father put one hand lightly on Harry's shoulder, but Harry shrugged himself violently, and his father took it away again, and it didn't make him feel even the least bit sorry when his father didn't say anything to him about it. He wanted to cry. He wanted like anything to cry, but he couldn't, somehow. He knew he was making his father miserable, and, when they got home, everybody else in the house miserable too, but he just didn't care about that, either. It wasn't fair. It wasn't fair—was it? Why should he be the only one in the road without a bike? He knew that his father didn't work for a big firm who gave him a lot of money, like a lot of other boys' fathers. He knew all that. He knew everything. But it was a second-hand bike, not a new one—so why couldn't he have it?

He lay in bed staring up at the dark ceiling and watching the pattern in the corner made by the light of the street lamp outside, and when his mother came

And then his father said to him, "Harry, you don't mind . . . doing without your bike again, do you?"

up and kissed him she 'd been crying, and he wondered if there 'd been another row, but he didn't care about that, either. He didn't care about anything any more, and never would.

But in the morning, when he wakened up, everything was changed. His mother ruffled his hair and her eyes were shining. She 'd been to see Father Christmas, she said—and Harry just wouldn't believe what Father Christmas had in store for him if he was a very good boy.

"It 's my bike!" he shouted excitedly. "It 's my bike!" But his mother pursed her lips then, and said he 'd have to wait and see; but he knew that was what it was, really, and even though he didn't truly and honestly believe there really was a Father Christmas now, he resolved to be just as good as he knew how, and especially as he 'd been so mean yesterday.

His father was all smiles and banter, too, when he got downstairs, and his two sisters, when they came home; and everybody was like that all the time until Christmas, and Harry knew that the bike would be by the side of the bed when he wakened up on Christmas morning.

But when he did waken up on Christmas morning he got the surprise of his life, for it wasn't the second-hand bike by the side of his bed but the red one that had been in the centre of the window; the one Father Christmas had been bending over, and there it was, by the side of his bed, with the red pump and the electric lamp and the tyres you blew up and the metal support and the glittering handlebars and everything. He could hardly believe it. That *he* should get this prince of bicycles—he, above everybody else! If the second-hand one was too expensive, surely this must have been even more expensive?

But Harry soon stopped bothering his head about that. As his mother was never tired of telling his father, no child had ever got more fun out of a bike than Harry. He "lived on it," as she put it. It became a joy to go errands with such bright handlebars as these to put the handle of the bag round. And he cycled down to the station every night to meet his father.

It was funny, he would think, as he slowly cycled up and down the road, his feet on the handlebars or his hands behind his back, how different everything was since he 'd had a bike. It was different with the other lads in the road. When they all played football now he didn't stand behind the coats, as he 'd used to do, stopping the ball from going on the road, or running after it when it had gone on the road. He played with the others, trying to get goals; and they usually had to persuade him to do that. And it was the same when cricket came along. They didn't expect him to carry all the tackle any more, and field out right over by the park shed, and go in last for his innings. If he couldn't be just like the others he didn't bother to play; and as they usually wanted him to play they were glad to have him playing just as everybody else did. It really was funny, he thought, the way they were proper friends with him now, now that he didn't seem to care about it so much, when, in the days before his bike, when he used to do almost anything to please them so that he could play with them, they sometimes didn't seem to want him with them. He 'd sit straighter on his bike at that, and begin whistling: his latest accomplishment.

And then something very frightening happened. His mother and father were not very happy, he knew, because his mother kept looking as though she wanted to cry and his father would sit glumly in front of the grate, an unlighted pipe in his mouth, and they would both be very nice indeed to him. Luckily it was summer and he was out on his bike nearly all day long, when he wasn't at school, of course; but he would often hear them talking together, especially when he was in bed at nights, just before falling off to sleep.

And then his father said to him: "Harry, you don't mind . . . doing without your bike again, do you?"

Harry was sitting on the rug, taking his stockings off and trying to read the words on the newspaper, wrong way up, that his mother had put over the clean fire-irons, and for a little while he couldn't make sense of what his father was saying; but he looked up very quickly when he did make it out. His father was in his favourite chair, staring at somewhere just over Harry's head, his unlighted pipe in his mouth and his chin looking much bigger than usual. His pipe never seemed to be alight nowadays, thought Harry.

"What . . . what d'you mean?" Harry asked his father.

"Well—I mean, if I sent it back again?"

And at that Harry burst into tears. He hadn't cried for ages and ages, but now he had started he just couldn't stop it. He sobbed as though his heart would break. His father picked him up and his mother came running in to him from outside, but do what they could and say what they could, they just couldn't pacify him, until at long last his father explained that all he meant was that he was sending the bike away to a new house they were going in, a long way off, and that it would be there when Harry got there. Harry didn't mind that, surely, did he?

Harry stopped crying and, nodding his head, for he was almost speechless, he agreed he didn't mind that a bit. He didn't mind living anywhere, or even losing his friends, so long as he didn't lose his bike. He was still sobbing a little when he fell asleep.

But next day his father made ample compensation. He 'd paint Harry's bike for him. A lot of the red enamel had chipped off now, and it no longer looked the resplendent machine it had been in the shop window; so Harry's father said

(Concluded on page iv)

"——and will you have a mask, sir?"

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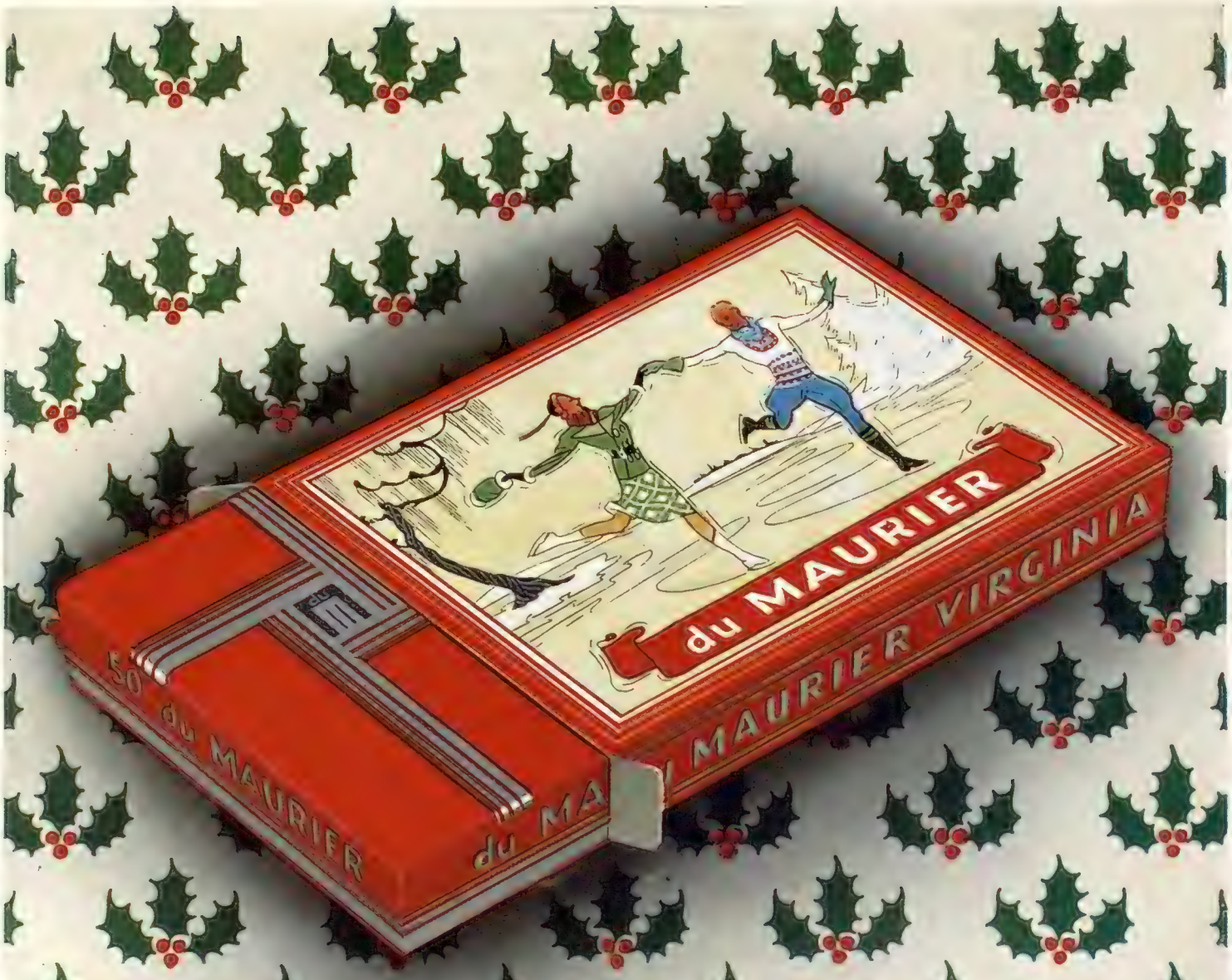

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Love My Dog

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" I should adore to, Mr. Grist ! "

ELYSIA PHILSPY, a young woman of unprepossessing appearance employed as book-keeper by a firm of wholesale sawdust merchants in the Borough, fell in love with her employer, Rupert Grist, a handsome devil, who wore a carnation in his buttonhole and owned a racing greyhound called Say When. For two years Elysia languished. She washed her hair with Wavoo, brushed it with a Ballswood Beauty Bristle, used a face-powder guaranteed to be identical with that employed by the Serpent of Old Nile, lived almost exclusively on foods which required to be dissolved in hot milk and drunk at bedtime, and, being unable to afford the cost of mud-packs, toyed with thoughts of the flower-garden and a spade. She practised all kinds of little tricks in order to attract the particular notice of her employer, such as becoming affectedly awkward in his presence, staying late at the office, arriving in the morning with a bunch of flowers, of which she would put a few on his desk while he was out at lunch, and keep the others on her own as a clue to the source from which this tribute flowed. When these devices failed to excite his interest—for he attributed both her evident embarrassment and her tardiness to native timidity and inefficiency, and was not interested in any flowers except those he bought himself—she went so far as to make deliberately wrong entries in the books, in the hope of being called into Rupert's solitary presence to explain them. Since their effect was to diminish the apparent profits of the business, Mr. Grist said nothing, hoping to deceive the income-tax authorities.

Elysia perceived that her love was not returned. She was, however, far from considering herself scorned; for she believed that it could only be a matter of time before her devotion would be recognised, and that a love like hers must inevitably, at some time or another, kindle an answering spark in the breast of its as yet unconscious object. Meanwhile, she increased her consumption of patent medicines and skin-foods, wore more expensive underclothes to give her confidence, waved her hair with a Kutie Kurler, and smoked only Dreamy Moments, warranted to be filled with The Tobacco of Allure.

One evening when she had stayed behind the others, Mr. Grist emerged from his room at the close of a telephone conversation, and looked all round the office.

" Oh, nobody but you here, Miss Philspy ? " he said.

" The others have all gone, Mr. Grist."

" Oh, I see." Mr. Grist stood in the doorway, hesitating. Elysia trembled in delighted anticipation, believing, yet scarcely daring to believe, that the moment she had waited for so long was come at last, and congratulating herself on having put on a brand new pair of stockings that very morning.

" Well," said Mr. Grist at length, " in that case . . . Do you ever go to the theatre, Miss Philspy ? "

" Why, yes, sometimes, Mr. Grist," said Elysia, all aflame with eagerness.

" Well, then, perhaps, if you 're not doing anything this evening——"

" Why, I believe I *am* free, Mr. Grist," said Elysia, affecting to consider.

" Because I 've got two seats for a show this evening, and if you 'd care to go——"

" I should adore to, Mr. Grist ! "

" —you can have them and take a friend, or your mother, or somebody, because I find I shan't have time to use them," concluded Mr. Grist; and, depositing the tickets on Elysia's desk, he turned away.

This was a sad blow to Elysia's hopes. But, on the whole, she was of a cheerful disposition; and, reflecting that her disappointment was no reason why the tickets should be wasted, she rang up her friend, Miss Lily Chittering, and invited her to share the evening's entertainment.

The seats were near the back of the dress-circle. The play was a musical comedy. The two young ladies were delighted with the one, and thought the other very nice. They agreed that the hero was terrifically handsome, that the heroine wore marvellous dresses, but that her figure was no better than their own when everything was taken into consideration, and that the comedian was a scream. Miss Chittering added that, in her opinion, he was a caution. After the performance, over two small orangeades at the Corner House, Elysia confided her troubles to her friend. " And he takes no more notice of me than if I was—than if I was anybody," she concluded.

" Have you tried Maiden Glamour ? " inquired Miss Chittering, screwing up her eyebrows with a judicial air.

" I use it regular. Before that I tried Bulger's Balsam, Producing an Effect Which No Man Can Resist, but it didn't seem to work out just right for me, somehow. Mind you, the stuff 's all right, because it said in the ad. how it was Prepared by the Latest and Costliest Methods which the Genius of the Most Gifted Scientists have made Available to Mankind. But I guess it didn't suit me. Not the right type for it, or something. You see, I——"

" What about Relaxo ? "

" I 've tried that too. It 's no good, Lily. I reckon I 've tried pretty nearly everything, and I don't know what I 'm going to do next; I don't really."

" Perhaps you smell bad," said Miss Chittering. " I saw the other day where it said how a girl who worked in an office smelt so bad her boss had to turn his head away every time he came near her. Her name was Joyce, I think, or maybe—no it wasn't, it was Elsie. He was an Army officer, or a stockbroker, or something. Anyway, one day she asked one of the other girls, just like you 're asking me, why this stockbroker, or whatever he was, kept turning away when she came near him, and her friend-

" Perhaps you smell bad," said Miss Chittering

says 'It's because you smell bad; why don't you try Perfumed Breezes?' And the next thing she knew she was walking through an archway of crossed swords and all the other girls was throwing confetti at her."

"But *I* don't smell bad, do I, Lily?"

"Not particularly," admitted Miss Chittering. "Not that I've noticed. But it said how four girls out of five that work in offices suffer from hallucinations, and that's the only thing that stops them marrying their bosses."

"Hallucinations? I thought that meant something different."

"Well, it means smelling bad, but they call it hallucinations. It said how four girls out of five that work in offices suffer from them, and how you couldn't be certain you weren't one of them, only if you bought Perfumed Breezes."

"I'll get some to-morrow, just in case," said Elysia. "But I don't think it's that, Lily. The fact is, I don't believe he'd be interested in me, no matter what I was like. I don't believe he's interested in anything but that dog of his."

"What dog?"

"One of those great scraggy things, what looks as if it had been shut in a door. He calls it a racing greyhound, but I never heard of it winning any races, nor running in any, come to that. He brings it to the office with him sometimes on a Saturday, to show it off to his business pals. Fair mad about it he is."

"Well, you can't do anything about that," said Miss Chittering, with an air of wisdom. "Not before you're married, that is. Dogs is dogs."

"You're right there, Lily," agreed Elysia, with a sigh, as they rose to go.

On their way to the bus-stop the two girls did not speak.

"Of course, there was Bessie Scrogspotch, what married that fellow from Australia," said Miss Chittering, as they were waiting for the bus. "She gave him a Portion."

"A portion of what, dear?"

"Not a portion of anything. Just a Portion. A Love Portion."

"Oh, you mean a potion, dear."

"Well, *I* call it a Portion. Of course, it you don't want to hear about it, I'm not one to offer advice where it's not wanted, that I *will* say for myself. But I do think, when a girl is only trying to help a girl, a girl might . . ."

Elysia conceded the superiority of her friend's pronunciation, and begged for further information. It appeared that the lady in question had obtained the Portion from a little shop in Southwark, kept by a Mrs. Ramage, and, though sceptical, had administered it according to instructions to the object of her ambition, with the consequence that she was now his wife. Elysia expressed her disapproval of such unchancy methods, and her doubt of their efficacy, but was careful to obtain the exact address of the little shop in Southwark.

Nevertheless, it was some time before she could reconcile her conscience to the use of an amatory weapon unsanctioned by modern custom or advertisement. But when several more weeks of unmitigated indifference on the part of her employer had convinced her that her case was desperate, she overcame her scruples and called at last at the little shop. Mrs. Ramage proved to be an elderly person of sinister and wheezing geniality, who at first denied all knowledge of such things as love-potions, but finally admitted that she occasionally obliged a friend with one. Elysia consented to become her friend; but how did you use the thing? Why, that was simple! All you did was to administer the potion to the man who took your fancy, and his subjugation was inevitable.

Elysia went in one direction, Mr. Grist desired to go in another

But, conceding that the potion made him fall in love, said Elysia, what guarantee was there that he would fall in love with *you*. "I can see," said Elysia, who had a smattering of literary knowledge, "that if it's a dizziack——"

"A what?"

"A dizziack. An Afro-dizziack," explained Elysia, who associated the term vaguely with the Dark Continent.

"It isn't a dizziack," said Mrs. Ramage. "It's a potion. Put it in 'is beer."

In short, Mrs. Ramage persuaded the prospective purchaser that whoever administered the potion was invariably the object of the passion it induced. With this assurance she departed, happy in the possession of a small medicine-bottle full of a colourless liquid, warranted by Mrs. Ramage capable of overcoming the most extreme aversion. Elysia did not expect to have an opportunity of putting the liquid into her employer's beer; but she thought carelessly that she would be sure to get a chance of administering it in his tea one afternoon.

In this she was disappointed. The tea was made in the farthest corner of the general office by the office-boy, who invariably poured out Mr. Grist's cup first, and carried it into his employer's room immediately he had done so, and the chance of getting near it unobserved, which she had unthinkingly regarded as being bound to occur before long, never came. She racked her brains attempting to think of a device for distracting the attention of the boy and her fellow-clerks at the critical moment, entirely without success. One possible method of administering the potion was left to her; and though it was subject to the risk that without the assistance of luck the liquid might be wasted, she had no option but to attempt it, or abandon her project altogether.

On Mr. Grist's desk, sealed by a tumbler, rested a carafe of water. Mr. Grist, returning to the office after lunch, and rendered thirsty by the effects of alcohol, tobacco, over-seasoned food, and conversation (for he was of a convivial temper, and often stayed talking and carousing with a set of cronies until closing time), was accustomed to drink copiously of it before settling down to work. That is to say, he did so, on an average, perhaps once in two days. It was the duty of the caretaker who looked after the building to see that the carafe was filled with fresh water every morning. But Elysia suspected that on those mornings when the carafe had been left untouched she was not always scrupulous to fulfil it. For some days she made a point of arriving early at the office; and, choosing a morning when the carafe had been freshly filled, she slipped into Mr. Grist's room as soon as the caretaker's back was turned, and, emptying a little of the water out of the window, replaced it by the contents of her little bottle. The liquid seemed to have no smell; and it was unlikely that such taste as it might possess would be noticed by one who drank to slake an alcoholic thirst.

The rest of the staff arrived, and Mr. Grist followed them. The morning wore

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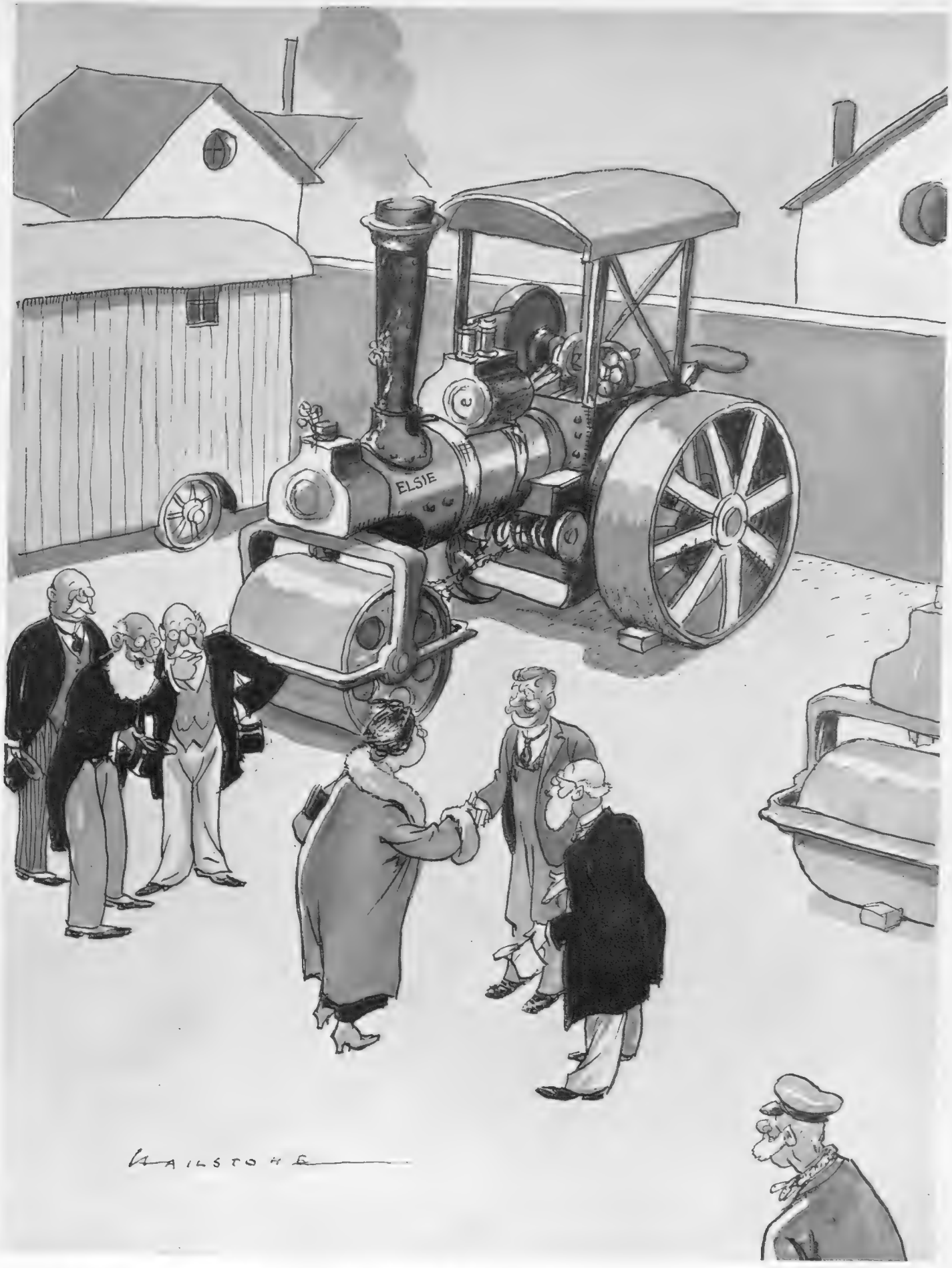


"This is Mr. Winterbottom, Lady Charlotte, our ace driver"

Crooner's Moon *(Continued from page 27)*

pin. Thus equipped, our friend had himself tenderly lowered on to a waste lot on the outskirts of Dorcus, and made his way with an amiable assurance into the best quarter of the town. That is one good thing about devils : they are at home anywhere, excellent linguists, bland, smiling, never at a loss for a compliment or an amusing little story. Zaphiron, though less facile than most of his race, was yet a better mixer than any Rotarian : he entered the most expensive restaurant in the town and ordered the finest meal its resources could provide.

He was vastly encouraged to see a number of buyers, executives and minor tycoons, dining tête-à-tête with an equal number of delicious blondes, only less ravishing than his Sadie. " Evidently," said he to himself, " it is only necessary to be ponderous, aquiline and slaty-grey in order to be smiled upon by these ravishing creatures. Very well, I am greyer than any of these, more aquiline, and I fancy I can wabble a better array of chins."

He heard the most tinkling laughter evoked by jokes the point of which entirely escaped him, and even saw dewlaps stroked or tweaked in response to compliments which struck him as excessively crude and amateurish. He conceived one or two highly poetical speeches, which he resolved to address to his Sadie, and his own dewlaps quivered in an ecstasy of anticipation.

Everything conspired to raise his hopes. He noticed that the blonde divinities quaffed eagerly at the most atrocious synthetic champagne, and seemed pleased by dishes which were definitely inferior to the messes prepared in his kennels. He conceived that they were very easily pleased, and only became doubtful when they failed to laugh at what seemed to him the most comical entertainment ever devised. This was when a young man, pathetically devoid of the dewlaps which so evidently pleased these charmers, came forward with a spotlight on his marcel-wave, and, with a spindly wriggle, tortured an idiot travesty of verse into a moaning caricature of song. Zaphiron, whose parrot, by this time, could compose and warble a very pretty madrigal, could not believe that this lunatic parody was seriously meant, but thought it was funnier than anything he had seen in Hell itself. He could not but feel the lovely audience were a little lacking in a sense of humour, in offering no heartier signs of appreciation than an occasional furtive smile at the performer. Sadie, he thought, being perfect, would inevitably see the fun of it. A sense of delicious well-being stole through his veins, his ears tingled, and he had a vision of the evenings they would spend on his verandah.

After one or two more expeditions in the town, he was familiar with nearly every pleasure that Dorcus had to offer : he had tasted its food, overheard conversations, observed its fashions, its architecture, and its landscape. With every new thing he saw, his optimism increased. Rightly or wrongly, he came to imagine he was rescuing his Sadie from a desert hideousness equal to that of the brimstone flats of Tartarus, and he flattered himself she would be grateful.

Accordingly our good Zaphiron, impatient at the sight of the caressing of lesser dewlaps, decided that he would wait no longer. He brought his planet to within six feet of Sadie's window-sill, and bridging the space with a delicately carved ivory gangway, he led a boarding party of his agile and silent-footed apes, who lifted her upon her mattress and carried her to her new home so prettily and so smoothly that she never even stirred in her sleep. Zaphiron saw her safely bestowed in his villa, and seizing the controls, put a hundred million miles between himself and the earth, which he judged sufficient to ensure him against the dangers of pursuit.

Sadie awoke next morning upon a balcony garlanded with vines, and looking out upon the azure waters of the miniature sea. She at first imagined herself transported to Mr. Hearst's ranch in California, and her regrets and her fears were lost in a prospect of the company of film-stars. You may imagine her disappointment when she found herself waited upon by obsequious grey monkeys, and was offered her choice from chests and cabinets overflowing with robes worthy of a Doge's palace, but containing nothing very recently advertised in the magazines. She asked them peremptorily what the racket was, but they, poor wretches, were ignorant of the English language, and replied only with mournful sighs, supplicating bows, and beseeching glances out of their ruby eyes. At last she understood that they wished to conduct her into another apartment, and followed them to where Zaphiron waited, clad in cream-coloured flannels and sporting a glossy new panama.

It is impossible to describe the old-world courtesy with which our friend raised this superlative new hat of his, and asked her if she had continued to sleep well.

Sadie, before replying, surveyed her captor and his surroundings with a keen though uninstructed eye. She perceived the evidences of wealth, but not those of taste. His rugs, his marbles, his Palladian hall seemed to her the normal setting for an orgy, and this impression was much heightened by the presence of the silver and silent-footed servitors. The word " Cleopatra " opened in her mind like a deep red rose drenched with expensive scent. She saw transparent pyjamas, brassières made entirely of pearls, finger-nails of unprecedented length and colour, snake-like movements of the arms ; she smelled incense, savoured the obeisances of slaves, imagined a police-raid, nation-wide publicity, the envy of the campus, vamp parts in Hollywood. . . .

" Antony ! " she said, extending her hand at the end of an undulating arm.

"M-m-m-m-m! Antony!"

Zaphiron pressed this hand warmly. " As a matter of fact," said he, " to be perfectly honest, my name is Zaphiron."

" It sounds Eastern," she said. " I love the East. What are you going to do with me ? "

" I am going," said Zaphiron, " to beg you to take some breakfast."

" And then ? "

" Well, then some lunch."

" And then ? "

" Dinner."

" And then ? "

" Well, then, my dear, no doubt you will want to go to sleep."

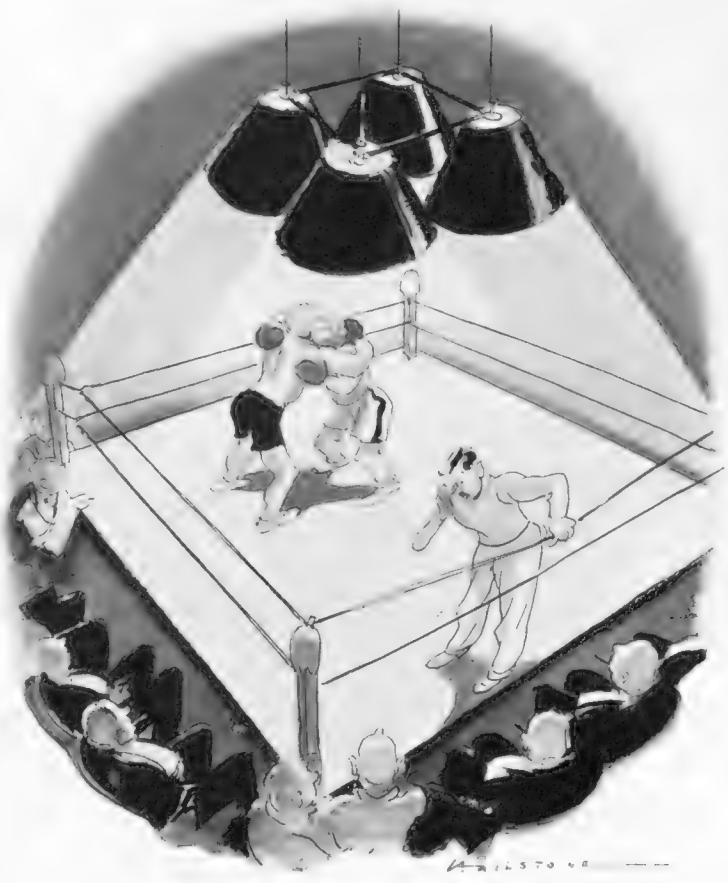
" Shall I be allowed to ? "

" Of course. But of course."

" Is that all ? Eat and sleep ? I wanna go home."

" Oh, but please ! " cried Zaphiron. " I 'm sorry. Forgive my stupidity. I have affronted

(Continued on page 76)



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Crooner's Moon *(Continued from page 74)*

you by a description of a base material routine. I should have spoken of a thousand delights. . . . ."

"Delights? I hope they're nothing wicked."

"Oh, no, my angel. We shall go in our boat. . . ."

"With curtains?" cried Sadie. "And slaves?"

"My honest ape fellows here will row us. I hardly call them slaves. Humble friends."

"I don't like them," cried Sadie, with a modest gesture. "I feel their eyes on me."

"They shall wear smoked spectacles."

"You're a fine Antony! You don't seem to understand anything."

"My dear," said Zaphiron. "Forgive me if I am stupid. Certainly horn-rimmed spectacles would be very incongruous. It was my love for you that spoke hastily in a blundering attempt to please."

"Your love?"

"Yes. I adore you. I have seen all the beauty of the farthest suns. It is nothing to yours. What riches, what loveliness this little world contains is all for you. Let me unfold it. Let me cast it before your feet. There are some things I can hardly describe."

"Oh, let's have breakfast. I want to see them."

Zaphiron, with a clap of his hands, signalled for the entry of a hundred courses of fresh fruits, speckled fishes, rare and delicate eggs, quails, ortolans, honey-combs of a dozen sorts; in short, it was a very good breakfast. Sadie, whose appetite prevailed over her Cleopatrian longings, bewailed the absence of canned tomato juice and Kracker Krisps.

"To-morrow," said Zaphiron to his venerable butler, "let there be Kracker Krisps and canned tomato juice. You can make them from almost anything."

The old butler, his circular fringe of delicate silver beard trembling as if seared by fire, bowed to the ground.

That day, Zaphiron, feeling that he had not the gift of description, summoned all the pleasures of his little planet to come crowding to the entertainment of his divinity. Rowed by twenty bird-voiced apes, they took a short trip over the clear waters of his lake, through which fishes of ever shape and colour were to be decried, and visited deep creeks overarched with translucent green, and carpeted with water-lilies of pink and white and gold. In the green silence of these creeks a single clear-toned bird would oblige them with an agreeable series of variations on its natural song. The effect was romantic to a degree. Even Sadie, as the rowers bore them out into the sunshine again, remarked that it was like coming out of a picture palace and finding it was still the afternoon.

It was, however, still the morning, and she had still to be shown the submarine gardens of the little sea, the monsters that sported in its centre, the flight of the flamingoes, the orchid groves on the lower shore, the vineyards and fields on the uplands, and a thousand other things. At every point they were regaled by music; in the villages of the apes the youngest silverlings would present bouquets, while Zaphiron's admirably trained parrot would, so to speak, dub in the dialogue from some overhanging branch, in the form of a well-turned sonnet or roundelay celebrating the beauty and virtue of his master's guest.

Sadie found little to say concerning everything she was shown, except now and then she would remark on some golden beach: "This ought to be made a proper bathing-pool. It wants a spring-board."

"Let there be a spring-board," her besotted admirer would cry.

"And here," she would observe, on some woody plateau, "there ought to be a country club."

"Let there be a country club," cried Zaphiron to his major domo. "Put some of the field hands into white flannels by day and tuxedos by night."

"And a cocktail bar," said Sadie.

"And a cocktail bar," said Zaphiron. "How tastes differ! Never mind, my beloved. I think you will like what I show you at home, for I have saved the best till last."

He showed her his paintings; the original ape had become increasingly deft, and had founded whole schools, of which the least example was equal to "The Death of Procris." He showed her his marbles, his tapestries, his clocks, his cabinets, his carpets, his salons, his library, his unicorn stables, his aviary of birds of paradise, his fish-ponds, his falconries, his kennels and, finally, the terraces, walks and borders and lawns which surrounded the house, and which were perhaps more tastefully arranged than any other ten acres in the entire universe.

Beyond suggesting that a few little tables and striped umbrellas would look very smart on a corner of the main terrace, Sadie made very little response to all this. She wondered whether there was a garage or whether this was Bermuda, but felt too listless to enquire.

In the evening there was a feast fit to be the prelude to any orgy in the world, and her spirits revived a little, so that she glanced about wondering whether she would come in rolled up in a carpet, or be original and employ a tapestry. After dinner, however, there was only a delicate little masque enacted by the household servants, a few minor pieces of chamber music, and then Zaphiron and she were left alone.

She turned the conversation, without much difficulty, on to love. This subject suited Zaphiron very well: his adoration had more facets than the Kohinoor, and a lifetime, he felt, was too short to describe the least of them. Fortunately, he was immortal. He indulged Sadie, therefore, with a brief outline of the major aspects of her beauty, and the simpler of the effects that it had on him. Then, pressing her hand very warmly, he bade her good-night.

Sadie, left alone, and listening for a step in the corridor, or the creaking of a secret door, found herself more baffled than ever. She pulled an enormous number of roses to pieces in the best possible style. "He's got the idea, in a way," she said. "But I reckon he's just a dreamer."

This theory gained colour as the days went by. She saw no signs of an orgy, no hope of a police raid, no possibility of

(Concluded on page 78

"*I* loathe *London in the winter*"

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Keep one in your car

Last July a committee of six experts met to decide the winners in a packaging contest organised by "Shelf Appeal." They selected the new Shell Oil tin as being the "most outstanding package designed for consumer convenience"—in other words the easiest to use. Have your sump drained and refilled with new Shell Oil and slip a tin in the back of the car. Shell oil contains an oily concentrate which causes it to cling to bearing surfaces, preventing corrosion and "dry-starting."

SHELL LUBRICATING OIL

Crooner's Moon *(Continued from page 76)*

nation-wide publicity. Her spirits sank lower and lower.

Zaphiron, observing this, redoubled his efforts to amuse her. Fireworks, water-parties, masques, seranades, followed one another in quick succession; but nothing pleased Sadie, who complained that there was not one hot number among the lot.

"Only say what you want," pleaded Zaphiron.

"I want," said she bitterly, "some fun."

This caused Zaphiron to sit for a long time with his head in his hands. His parrot had already plucked himself stark naked in his striving after new perfections of sweetness or satire. "I would do anything to make her smile," thought Zaphiron. "Great heavens!" thought he, smacking his thigh. "I wonder if that performing fellow I saw in the restaurant might do it."

With the inspiration his resolve was formed. He gave instructions to his major domo, and urged his planet with terrific speed towards the earth. That night a landing-party of his faithful apes intercepted the crooner on his way home, and brought him to Zaphiron.

The kindly devil soon put the crooner at his ease. "All you have to do," said he, "is to win a smile from the lady you will see dining with me tomorrow night, and your fortune is made." The crooner demanded no better opportunity, and the following evening, while Sadie drooped and pouted over a vol-au-vent filled with the brains of peacocks, the notes of a saxophone were heard, and Zaphiron was delighted to see a look of interest and excitement irradiate her face.

The curtains of an alcove were drawn apart, and the crooner, who had devoted the day to the restoration of his marcel wave, stood there in all his glory.

"Gee, this is the goods!" murmured Sadie.

"Wait till you hear him," whispered Zaphiron. "He sings of the moon, love, everything."

"Look at his wave," cried Sadie.

"And his figure," said Zaphiron, smoothing a dewlap.

"What a figure!" cried Sadie. "But listen to this."

In a word, the crooner was a great hit. Sadie was unable to resist sending him an alluring smile. Zaphiron noted this smile. "How subtle she is!" thought he. "Some girls would burst into a cackle of laughter. She relishes every absurdity. I have pleased her at last."

Everyone was delighted, the crooner no less than the others. Sadie, you may be sure, soon contrived a private interview. "That last number was sure honey," said she. "It did something to me, right here, big boy, and I want you to know it."

"That," said the crooner, "is just the old palooka compared to what I want to write for you, little lady. I got an idea—'Honeymoon World.'"

He hummed a bar or two, "Honeymoon Woil, just me an' my goil. . . ."

"Me inspire that?" cried Sadie, "You 're kidding."

No, kiddo," said the crooner. "See what I mean. This is the world. Honeymoon World. Just for two, eh?"

"Yes. But what about old rubber face?"

"Say, honey. Is that what you call him? Rubber face?"

"He 's a pain in the neck to me."

"Li'l goil, you make me happy right here. I gotta kiss you for that, honey. I just gotta."

"No."

"Look at the moon. Look at the trees. Look at the waves. They 're talking of love, baby. Gimme those eyes of thine. Gimme those lips of thine. Why should I pine?"

"Oh, it 's beautiful when you sing. That 's what I 've been longing for—beauty."

"Yes. You been starved, honey. Never no more."

"Never no more."

Zaphiron was delighted to see his charmer smiling and happy again. In gratitude he was very gracious to the crooner, whom he found an appreciative listener when he exhibited his fossils, his telescope, his propulsive ray.

"You got a wonderful place, Mr. Zaphiron," said the crooner, "and you 've certainly got a wonderful little lady. Gee, the way that baby adores her daddy! You don't often see it that way. It 's certainly very sweet."

"You make me very happy," said the innocent old devil.

"Say, there 's one thing would make that girlie's eyes sparkle," said the crooner. "Haven't you ever thought of giving her a Paris frock? Listen, I know she wants one. I eared-in on her whispering it to a rose. 'I love my dear Zaphy'—I wish you could have heard her—'if only he 'd give me a Paris frock.'"

"Did she indeed?" cried the enraptured Zaphiron. "We 'll moor over Paris to-night. My apes shall gather her armfuls of them."

"'One he 'd choose for me himself,' she murmured to that rose," said the crooner, "'to show he loves me.'"

"I 'll look through all the frocks in Paris," cried Zaphiron.

That evening the watchful crooner saw the lights of Paris advance out of a background of stars. He saw Zaphiron come out of his little engine room and cross the frail ivory gangway on to the roof of Haute Couture. "Honey," said he to Sadie, who was crouching by his side, "how would you like this to be your real honeymoon world? So we could go to Hollywood, Palm Beach, everywhere, and ask folks aboard for a cruise?"

"Oh, darling!" she murmured.

"O.K.," said he, and made for the controls.

There is no record of their arrival at Hollywood; perhaps the crooner had not fully mastered the navigation of the little planet. Zaphiron only wishes they would return, that he might beg a few old rugs out of his little palace, to enrich the stock that he now peddles in the cafés on the Boulevard des Capucines.

THE END

"My goodness, it 's his Guinness"

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AMONG THESE PRESENTS. 3817—4-oz. bottle of Eau de Cologne Cordon Rouge ready packed and labelled in an original wooden casket. You have nothing to do but fill in the address and post it. 5/-.

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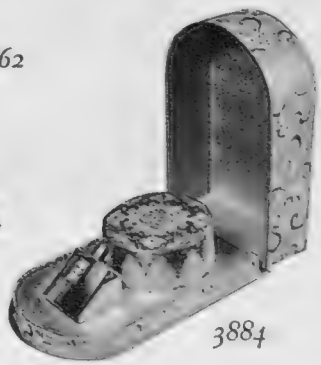
3862



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3817

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Coty

REMEMBER — that these are only three of dozens which you must see to appreciate.

Fireworks in December *(Continued from page 49)*

"Do, do give your permission!" begged Mr. Penbury, plucking at Piers' sleeve like an importunate child.

Piers shrugged wearily. "Oh, very well."

Mr. Penbury clasped his hands. "Oh, thank you, thank you! I 'll only be a moment. Everything 's in my study. . . . All my life I 've wanted to test. . . . I 'll only be a moment. . . ." Beaming and incoherent, he hurried out.

Piers sat down at the half-cleared table and rested his head on his hands. So that was that. A pity. He 'd worked hard to please her; she couldn't help being awful. She was perfectly right to refuse to buy—perfectly right. They had behaved inexcusably to her. But it was a pity. Everything would have to go now, he supposed, and looked around him at the candle-lit room with sight made clearer by the knowledge of parting.

In the far corner he saw without surprise the figure of van Huymer, glimmering sheepishly. "So you 're back again," he said wearily. "Haven't you done enough for one night?"

Van Huymer grew clearer and hung his head, so that the curls fell over his face like the ears of a spaniel. "Nay, boy," he said, "be not offended."

"I 'm not," said Piers. "I suppose you couldn't help it."

Van Huymer approached the table and sat down beside him. "I could not, boy; by the breath of God, I could not! My hand on it."

They shook hands. Van Huymer brightened. "'Tis good. Now shake away these dumps. You must haf money, not?"

"Not," agreed Piers.

"And nothing brings so much money as my Wenus? The other pictures?"

"They 're insured, but that 's no help. And I don't think anyone particularly wants to buy them."

Van Huymer gave a deep chuckle. "How that dull-witted, spindle-shanked dauber Knollys would wince at that, by God! Tush!" He snapped his fingers soundlessly at his rival's memory. "Now harken, boy; I had ever a tender conscience, and deny it as you will, there iss a part in me which says I am in some small measure to blame for this night's business." Piers opened his mouth to agree with him, but van Huymer held up a dignified hand. "Protest not!. I haf a great heart, boy. Therefore leave all to me. Before the night iss out all things will be hokay!" And with businesslike suddenness, he disappeared completely.

MRS. HAMILTON-BAGG, conscious, cold-creamed and alone, was waiting for sleep. It was a long time coming, and fled in a terrified rush before the figure of van Huymer, arms folded, scowling down at her from the bedside.

"Get up, madam!" he ordered in a sombre, spectral voice.

Clutching the bedclothes to her chin, she lay and quaked. Van Huymer elongated himself till he towered almost to the ceiling, and under his stare all rebellion went out of her. She sat up and reached for her dressing-gown. Seeing her shingle-cap, he gave a shudder. "You outrage my rememberings," he muttered, shrinking to normal size, then turned and strode to the door. "Come, madam," he said.

Hypnotised, Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg got out of bed and followed him, out of her room, down the dark passage, down the staircase to the picture gallery. The door was still locked, but seemed to melt before them so that they passed through it with ease, between the ranks of painted Latimers.

As they reached the Venus a shaft of light from a car's headlamps sped across it, and from the garden below came the banging of car-doors and the vicar's excited voice.

Van Huymer looked up at his picture, and the curls falling away from his round face showed it strangely serious.

"Look, madam!" He pointed upwards, and the cherub, lit by the nearness of his hand, sprang into sight, rosy, rotund, stern-upwards, with its grape. "You wish to buy him?"

Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg struggled back to full consciousness. Clasping her dressing-gown about her, her voice was shrill with indignation. "Buy that? I certainly will not! It 's not the same picture! It 's a fraud—it 's a swindle—trying to take my money and palm me off with a fake! It 's an outrage—a wicked fake!"

Van Huymer's solemnity fell from him. "By God!" he cried. "I haf had enough of you, Bagg hag! Go, go, pleasure this place by quitting it! I show you beauty and all you say iss 'falsehood'! I haf given you a last chance—now, by God, Bagg hag, I wipe my hands of you!"

With a shrill squeal Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg turned and scuttled out of the gallery. Van Huymer listened to her slippers flapping down the stone passage. At darling Alister's room they stopped; a second's silence; then pandemonium. A scream from Mrs. Hamilton-Bagg, followed by a torrent of angry words, weak masculine expostulations, the high-pitched Cockney of van Huymer's Venus, the clap of open palm on flesh, more screams—and as the vicar's fireworks burst into sudden hissing action outside in the garden, Nelly burst into the picture gallery. She was flushed and tearful, her curls in disarray, the old red dressing-gown abandoned. She paused, startled by the blaze and sparkle from outside, and the golden light lit up her silver flesh.

Van Huymer held out his hand. "They gild my lily," he said softly. "Come, my Nell. You were ever a trollop, and 'twas thus I loved you."

She came to him, and with his arm about her shoulders they looked down into the garden. There, black as a gnome against the blaze of his paraphernalia, Mr. Penbury skipped with lighted match from Catherine-wheel to rocket, from rocket to Roman candle. Fizzing and spluttering, the fireworks spun and sprayed in the darkness.

"What 's 'e doing, chuck?" asked Nelly softly.

A smile spread over van Huymer's face. Reaching out of the open window, he drew a little fiery rocket from its course and held it, spitting glitter, in his hand.

"A service to mankind," he rumbled, and, blowing it a kiss, he tossed the rocket at "Danæ and Jupiter." It caught in the heavy frame, and strangely quickly its gold ran up the painted canvas.

Nelly clapped her hands to her red mouth. "Ooh, Corny!" she whispered. "Why ever did you do that?"

Hugging her to him, van Huymer chuckled. "To pay two debts, my pretty," he answered. "Knollys to me—a great one, that—and mine to bully Piers." He paused, and listened to the louder confusion of fireworks and voices, first from the garden, then spreading inside the house. "Come, sweetheart. They are hurrying up the stairs to quench the fires before they harm my Wenus. There are people of discernment, Nell, who will pay my bully Piers much recompense for this so ravaged Knollys." He gave a huge laugh above the crackling of the little hungry flames. "They should pay me, van Huymer, who haf put it on the spit, by God!"

There was banging on the door now, and the rattle of handle and key in lock. And as Piers and the others burst in, a blaze of light from the last firework gave splendour to the empty gallery.

THE END.

"He says he 's our guest artist"

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LUXURY BLEND SCOTCH WHISKY

Distilled and bottled in Scotland by Wm. Sanderson & Son Ltd., LEITH.

C.F.H.

Christmas at Cold Comfort Farm

(Continued from page 6)

the Christmas dinner about half-past two the next afternoon. They would all have sooner been in some place else, but Mrs. Ada Doom (Grandmother Doom, known as Grummer) insisted on them all being there, and as they did not want her to go mad and bring disgrace on the House of Starkadder, there they had to be.

One by one they came in, the men from the fields with soil on their boots, the women fresh from hennery and duck filch with eggs in their bosoms that they gave to Mrs. Beetle, who was just making the custard. Everybody had to work as usual on Christmas Day, and no one had troubled to put on anything handsomer than their usual workaday clouts stained with mud and plough-oil. Only Elfine wore a cherry-red jersey over her dark skirt and had pinned a spray of holly on herself. An aunt, a distant aunt, named Mrs. Poste, who lived in London, had unexpectedly sent her the pretty jersey. Prue and Letty had stuck sixpenny artificial posies in their hair, but they only looked wild and queer.

At last all were seated and waiting for Ada Doom.

"Come, come, mun we stick here like jennets i' the trave?" demanded Micah at last. "Amos, Reuben, do ee carve the turkey. If so be as we wait much longer, 'twill be shent, and the sausages, too."

Even as he spoke, heavy footsteps were heard approaching the head of the stairs, and everybody at once rose to their feet and looked towards the door.

The low-ceilinged room was already half in dusk, for it was a cold, still Christmas Day, without much light in the grey sky, and the only other illumination came from the dull fire, half-buried under a tass of damp kindling.

Adam gave a last touch to the pile of presents, wrapped in hay and tied with bast, which he had put round the foot of the withered thorn-branch that was the traditional Starkadder Christmas-tree, hastily rearranged one of the tufts of sheep's-wool that decorated its branches, straightened the raven's skeleton that adorned its highest branch, in place of a fairy-doll or star, and shuffled into his place just as Mrs. Doom reached the foot of the stairs, leaning on her daughter Judith's arm. Mrs. Doom struck at him with her stick in passing as she went slowly to the head of the table.

"Well, well. What are we waiting for? Are you all mis-hooden?" she demanded impatiently as she seated herself. "Are you all here? All? Answer me!" banging her stick.

"Ay, Grummer," rose the low, dreary drone from all sides of the table. "We be all here."

"Where 's Seth?" demanded the old woman, peering sharply on either side of the long row.

"Gone out," said Harkaway briefly, shifting a straw in his mouth.

"What for?" demanded Mrs. Doom.

There was an ominous silence.

"He said he was going to fetch something, Grandmother," at last said Elfine.

"Ay. Well, well, no matter, so long as he comes soon. Amos, carve the bird. Ay, would it were a vulture, 'twere more fitting! Reuben, fling these dogs the fare my bounty provides. Sausages . . . pah! Mince-pies . . . what a black-bitter mockery it all is! Every almond, every raisin, is wrung from the dry, dying soil and paid for with sparse greasy notes grudged alike by bank and buyer. Come, Ezra, pass the ginger wine! Be gay, spawn! Laugh, stuff yourselves, gorge and forget, you rat-heaps! Rot you all!" and she fell back in her chair, gasping and keeping one eye on the British Port-type that was now coming up the table.

"Tes one of her bad days," said Judith tonelessly. "Amos, will you pull a cracker wi' me? We were lovers . . . once."

"Hush, woman." He shrank back from the proffered treat. "Tempt me not wi' motters and paper caps. Hell is paved wi' such." Judith smiled bitterly and fell silent.

Reuben, meanwhile, had seen to it that Elfine got the best bit off the turkey (which was not saying much) and had filled her glass with Port-type wine and well-water.

The turkey gave out before it got to Letty, Prue, Susan, Phœbe, Jane and Rennet, who were huddled together at the foot of the table, and they were making do with brussels-sprouts as hard as bullets, drenched with weak gravy, and home-brewed braket. There was silence in the kitchen except for the sough of swallowing, the sudden suck of drinking.

"WHERE IS SETH?" suddenly screamed Mrs. Doom, flinging down her turkey-leg and glaring round.

Silence fell; everyone moved uneasily, not daring to speak in case they provoked an outburst. But at that moment the cheerful, if unpleasant, noise of a motor-cycle was heard outside, and in another moment it stopped at the kitchen door. All eyes were

(Concluded on page 84)

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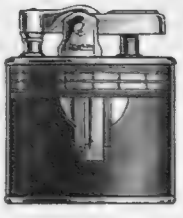

MEN'S POCKET-LIGHTER
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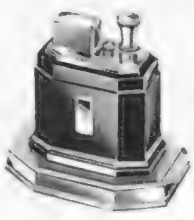
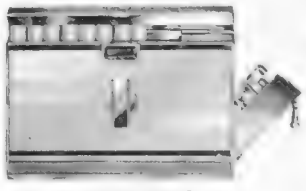
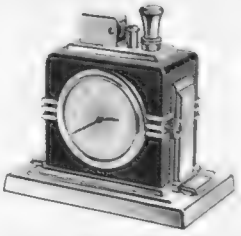


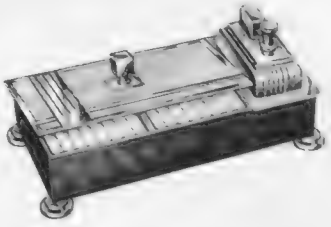
TOUCHTIP
No. 2104. Enamelled table-lighter in black, white, tortoise, maroon, green or turquoise - - 25/-



BEAUTICASE
No. 5050. Combined cigarette-case and lighter. Enamelled in tortoise, ivory or black - - - - 52/6



CLOCK and TOUCHTIP
No. 16336. Touchtip desk-lighter complete with clock. Black and chromium - - - - 57/6



TOUCHTIP & CIGARETTE-BOX
No. 16353. Streamlined chromium-plated cigarette-box, hinged lid, black/white, tortoise/ivory - 52/6

Ronson Products Ltd., 112, Strand, London, W.C.2.

Christmas at Cold Comfort Farm *(Continued from page 82)*

turned in that direction, and in another moment in came Seth.

"Well, Grummer! Happen you thought I was lost!" he cried impudently, peeling off his boots and flinging them at Meriam, the hired girl, who cowered by the fire gnawing a sausage skin.

Mrs. Doom silently pointed to his empty seat with the turkey-leg, and he sat down.

"She hev had an outhees. Ay, 'twas terrible," reproved Judith in a low tone as Seth seated himself beside her.

"Niver mind, I ha' something here as will make her chirk like a mellet," he retorted, and held up a large brown paper parcel. "I ha' been to the Post Office to get it."

"Ah, gie it me! Aie, my lost pleasurings! Tes none I get, nowadays; gie it me now!" cried the old woman eagerly.

"Nay, Grummer. Ee must wait till pudden time," and the young man fell on his turkey ravenously.

When everyone had finished, the women cleared away and poured the pudding into a large dusty dish, which they bore to the table and set before Judith.

"Amos? Pudding?" she asked listlessly. "In a glass or on a plate?"

"On plate, on plate, woman," he said feverishly bending forward with a fierce glitter in his eye. "Tes easier to see the Year's Luck so."

A stir of excitement now went through the company, for everybody looked forward to seeing everybody else drawing ill-luck from the symbols concealed in the pudding, and a fierce, attentive silence fell. It was broken by a wail from Reuben—

"The coin—the coin! Wala wa!" and he broke into deep, heavy sobs. He was saving up to buy a tractor, and the coin meant, of course, that he would lose all his money during the year.

"Never mind, Reuben, dear," whispered Elfine, slipping an arm round his neck. "You can have the penny father gave me."

Shrieks from Letty and Prue now announced that they had received the menthol cone and the sticking-plaster, and a low mutter of approval greeted the discovery by Amos of the broken mirror.

Now there was only the coffin-nail, and a ghoulish silence fell on everybody as they dripped pudding from their spoons in a feverish hunt for it; Ezra was running his through a tea-strainer.

But no one seemed to have got it.

"Who has the coffin-nail? Speak, you draf-saks!" at last demanded Mrs. Doom.

"Not I." "Nay." "Niver sight nor smitch of it," chorused everybody.

"Adam!" Mrs. Doom turned to the old man. "Did you put the coffin-nail into the pudding?"

"Ay, mistress, that I did—didn't I, Mis' Judith, didn't I, Elfine, my liddle lovesight?"

"He speaks truth for once, mother."

"Yes, he did, Grandmother. I saw him."

"*Then where is it?*" Mrs. Doom's voice was low and terrible and her gaze moved slowly down the table, first on one side and then the other, in search of signs of guilt, while everyone cowered over their plates.

Everyone, that is, except Mrs. Beetle, who continued to eat a sandwich that she had taken out of a cellophane wrapper with every appearance of enjoyment.

"Carrie Beetle!" shouted Mrs. Doom.

"I 'm 'ere," said Mrs. Beetle.

"Did you take the coffin-nail out of the pudding?"

"Yes, I did." Mrs. Beetle leisurely finished the last crumb of sandwich and wiped her mouth with a clean handkerchief. "And will again, if I 'm spared till next year."

"You . . . you . . . you . . ." choked Mrs. Doom, rising in her chair and beating the air with her clenched fists. "For two hundred years . . . Starkadders . . . coffin-nails in puddings . . . and now . . . you . . . dare. . . ."

"Well, I 'ad enough of it las' year," retorted Mrs. Beetle. "That pore old soul Earnest Dolour got it, as well you may remember——"

"That 's right. Cousin Earnest," nodded Mark Dolour. "Got a job workin' on the oil-field down Henfield way. Good money, too."

"Thanks to me, if he 'as," retorted Mrs. Beetle. "If I 'adn't put it up to you, Mark Dolour, you 'd 'ave let 'im die. All of you was 'angin' over the pore old soul waitin' for 'im to 'and in 'is dinner pail, and Micah (wot 's old enough to know better, 'eaven only knows) askin' 'im could 'e 'ave 'is wrist-watch if anything was to 'appen to 'im . . . it fair got me down. So I says to Mark, why don't ee go down and 'ave a word with Mr. Earthdribble the undertaker in Howling and get 'im to tell Earnest it weren't a proper coffin-nail at all, it were a throw-out, so it didn't count. The bother we 'ad! Shall I ever fergit it! Never again, I says to meself. So this year there ain't no coffin-nail. I fished it out o' the pudden meself. Parss the water, please."

"Where is it?" whispered Mrs. Doom, terribly. "Where is this year's nail, woman?"

"Down the——" Mrs. Beetle checked herself, and coughed, "down the well," concluded Mrs. Beetle firmly.

"Niver fret, Grummer, I 'll get it up fer ee! Me and the water voles, we can dive far and deep!" and Urk rushed from the room, laughing wildly.

"There ain't no need," called Mrs. Beetle after him. "But anything to keep you an' yer rubbishy water voles out of mischief!" And Mrs. Beetle went into a cackle of laughter, alternately slapping her knee and Caraways' arm, and muttering, "Oh, cor, wait till I tell Agony! 'Dive far and deep.' Oh, cor!" After a minute's uneasy silence—

"Grummer." Seth bent winningly towards the old woman, the large brown paper parcel in his hand. "Will you see your present now?"

"Aye, boy, aye. Let me see it. You 're the only one that has thought of me, the only one."

Seth was undoing the parcel, and now revealed a large book, handsomely bound in red leather with gilt lettering.

"There, Grummer. 'Tis the year's numbers o' *The Milk Producers' Weekly Bulletin and Cowkeepers' Guide*. I collected un for ee, and had un bound. Art pleased?"

"Ay. It 's handsome enough. A graceful thought," muttered the old lady, turning the pages. Most of them were pretty battered, owing to her habit of rolling up the paper and hitting anyone with it who happened to be within reach. "'Tis better so. 'Tis heavier. Now I can *throw* it."

The Starkadders so seldom saw a clean and handsome object at the farmhouse (for Seth was only handsome) that they now crept round, fascinated, to examine the book with murmurs of awe. Among them came Adam, but no sooner had he bent over the book than he recoiled from it with a piercing scream.

"Aie! . . . aie! aie!"

"What 's the matter, dotard?" screamed Mrs. Doom, jabbing at him with the volume. "Speak, you kaynard!"

"Tes calf! Tes bound in calf! And tes our Pointless's calf, as she had last Lammastide, as was sold at Godmere to Farmer Lust!" cried Adam, falling to the floor. At the same instant, Luke hit Micah in the stomach, Harkaway pushed Ezra into the fire, Mrs. Doom flung the bound volume of *The Milk Producers' Weekly Bulletin and Cowkeepers' Guide* at the struggling mass, and the Christmas dinner collapsed into indescribable confusion.

In the midst of the uproar, Elfine, who had climbed on to the table, glanced up at the window as though seeking help, and saw a laughing face looking at her, and a hand in a yellow string glove beckoning with a riding-crop. Swiftly she darted down from the table and across the room, and out through the half-open door, slamming it after her.

Dick Hawk-Monitor, a sturdy boy astride a handsome pony, was out in the yard.

"Hallo!" she gasped. "Oh, Dick, I am glad to see you!"

"I thought you never would see me—what on earth 's the matter in there?" he asked curiously.

"Oh, never mind them, they 're always like that. Dick, do tell me, what presents did you have?"

"Oh, a rifle, and a new saddle, and a fiver—lots of things. Look here, Elfine, you mustn't mind, but I brought you——"

He bent over the pony's neck and held out a sandwich box, daintily filled with slices of turkey, a piece of pudding, a tiny mince-pie and a crystallised apricot.

"Thought your dinner mightn't be very——" he ended gruffly.

"Oh, Dick, it 's lovely! Darling little . . . what is it?"

"Apricot. Crystallised fruit. Look here, let 's go up to the usual place, shall we?—and I 'll watch you eat it."

"But you must have some, too."

"Man! I 'm stoked up to the brim now! But I dare say I could manage a bit more. Here, you catch hold of Rob Roy, and he 'll help you up the hill."

He touched the pony with his heels and it trotted on towards the snow-streaked Downs, Elfine's yellow hair flying out like a shower of primroses under the grey sky of winter.

THE END.

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Love My Dog *(Continued from page 72)*

on towards lunchtime. Mr. Grist went out to lunch at his usual hour. Elysia ate a hurried meal, and, back in the office, awaited his return with feelings of mingled eagerness and apprehension. Her heart sank when he came back in good time, and accompanied by an obvious business acquaintance of unconvivial demeanour. In these circumstances it was improbable that he would have recourse to the carafe; and, sure enough, when a demand for the sales ledger took her into his room later in the afternoon, she saw it untouched on his desk. It was only then she realised that the next day was Saturday, when her employer would not be returning to the office after lunch, so that his having occasion to slake his thirst with water was unlikely in the extreme. By Monday morning the carafe would inevitably have been refilled, and the potion would be wasted.

This was a misfortune of the most annoying kind. But as there was nothing she could do to retrieve it, Elysia resolved to submit to circumstances, to wait till Monday, and then, if necessary, to purchase another bottle of the potion and make the attempt again.

Next morning, Mr. Grist arrived at the office very late, accompanied by his greyhound, announced that he would stop only to read his letters and transact essential business, and passed into his office. Evidently he was on his way to exhibit the animal to one of his sporting acquaintances. Eylsia had never cared for the beast, regarding it as the principal obstacle to her conquest of its proprietor's affections; and she drew in her legs nervously as it sniffed at her in passing. Her eyes filled with tears of mortification as she thought how all the care and thought and kindness, which she would know so well how to reciprocate, were squandered on an uncomprehending brute that looked as if it had been compressed between two cricket-bats. With mechanical awareness, she heard her employer's bell ring, saw the office-boy go into his room, come out again, and return with the enamel basin he employed in washing-up the teacups. It was not until some minutes had elapsed that a mind benumbed by sadness, applying itself to the instinctive task of attaching a meaning to these events, was visited by an idea fraught with fearful and disturbing possibilities. Elysia, hastily snatching up the petty-cash book in excuse, rushed to the door of her employer's room and entered it without ceremony.

What she saw was only too complete a justification of her apprehension. The carafe stood empty on the desk; on the floor was the enamel basin; and over it stood the greyhound, engaged, under his master's fatuously indulgent eye, in licking the last drops of moisture from his jaws. Say When had drunk the love-potion!

Subsequent events provided the most embarrassing confirmation of this obvious deduction. As soon as he saw Elysia, Say When rushed towards her, displaying all the signs of complete infatuation, wagging his stringy tail and frisking about her, at one moment pawing at her knees and gazing into her face adoringly, at the next abasing himself before her as if he wished to squirm his way into the carpet. When she left the room, he whined pitifully, and scrabbled at the door until it was opened, when he ran straight to where she sat bewildered at her desk, and laid his head upon her lap. The scene that took place at the close of the morning's work was painful and awkward in the extreme. Leaving the office, Elysia went in one direction, Mr. Grist desired to go in another. But Say When put up such a furious and desperate struggle that a crowd threatened to collect, and Mr. Grist having been audibly referred to by a loafer who stood by as an inhuman monster, he was compelled, much against his inclination, to follow his book-keeper home to the suburb where she lived. Since to ignore this pursuit would have been the absurdest affectation, Elysia had an excellent pretext for inviting her employer, under colour of the most commonplace politeness, to refresh himself at its termination with a cup of tea. He accepted the invitation with indifference; Say When was in the seventh heaven. Mr. Grist was one of those self-indulgent men who are obstinate only when obstinacy does not entail much fatigue. He took the line of least resistance, and spent the afternoon with Elysia, who profited by the occasion to show herself indispensable to the comfort of Say When and his master.

At its close, he was able to get away in good order only by conspiring with Elysia to play a trick on the infatuated animal. Say When consented to be taken home in the belief that he would find Elysia awaiting him. When he found that he had been deceived, he grew sulky, and refused to take food from his master. Mr. Grist held out for three days, during which the animal pined visibly. At the end of that time he took the dog to see Elysia: Say When's cheerfulness was immediately restored.

In these circumstances there was clearly only one thing to be done. Mr. Grist begged Elysia to take charge of the animal on her own terms, stipulating only that he should be allowed to visit it occasionally. This arrangement was, however, far from agreeable to an owner's pride. Moreover, every time he called to see the dog he found it less inclined to welcome him, and more forgetful of his identity. Faced with the effective loss of his pet, or, as an alternative, the conclusion of a more intimate arrangement with its guardian, Mr. Grist did not hesitate. Three weeks after Say When had drunk the potion, he proposed to Elysia, and a fortnight later they were married.

THE END.

"Haven't you been rather overdoing things, Judson?"

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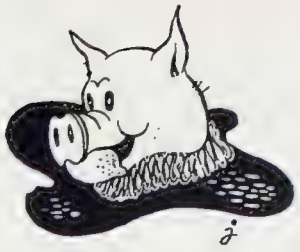

By Sylva Norman

Sketches by Joy Batchelor

THERE seems to be some mistake about this title, for indeed it was none of my choosing. I was meditating on Christmas in no glorious colours, but in the subdued and faded tones of a latter-day heretic full of doubts and queries. This intrusive title, placed here by the malice of some party unknown, is itself a query. It sounds mighty like

a rose or a new breakfast cereal, and shines preposterously against my dingier thoughts. Perhaps it will explain itself eventually. Meanwhile my true intent is to anatomise Christmas, and possibly to bury instead of praising. But catastrophe is on me; the pen is about to be snatched away again. Off it goes. . . .

Christmas-time! That man must be a misanthrope indeed, in whose breast something like a jovial feeling is not roused by the recurrence of Christmas—the merriest day of the three hundred and sixty-five. Who can be insensible to the outpourings of good feeling, and the honest interchange of affectionate attachment, which abound at this season of the year? A Christmas family party! We know nothing in nature more delightful! Petty jealousies and discords are forgotten; social feelings are awakened in bosoms to which they have long been strangers; father and son, or brother and sister, who have met and passed with averted gaze or a look of cold recognition for months before, proffer and return the cordial embrace, and bury their past animosities in their present happiness. Would that Christmas lasted the whole year through——!

That last wish was too much for me, and I have got my pen back. But I recognise the hand that held it. This wordy dithyramb was written by the ghost of my too-great great-Uncle Charles (many times removed), who has threatened to haunt me ever since I gave away his daguerreotype to a lad begging for cigarette-cards. He was always a whopping story-teller, and I can't tell whether these are his own genuine sentiments about Christmas or something he has put together after looking at frosted greeting-cards and reading popular tales. What's more, he is too far removed to be questioned on it. However, I can at least rebel—if the nib be not crossed beyond all using.

Very well, then, Uncle Charles, I am a misanthrope. I am insensible to good feeling, and an enemy of nature's most unnatural delight. We have only to blow on all this heartiness to turn it inside out. We are sceptical about that glitter of frost that frames your picture. We don't believe that everyone always got out of bed on the right side (no matter where the stocking might be hanging); nor that good digestion followed appetite; nor that a family reunion was an unmixed blessing; nor that the black sheep always bought a coat of whitewash and all feuds were healed. It isn't so now; and are we so much inferior to our ancestors? No; the truth is we are accurate, and decline to be hoodwinked. We have grown so skilful at debunking that until we throw in a new bunk or two we shall be deprived of practice in the art.

Now Charles and his cronies were quite different. They professed belief in uplift, even in the solid guise of a prize turkey sent by an employer to his threadbare clerk. Anyone who can translate turkey into uplift is a wizard indeed. He would be on the air to-day. And then, once upon a time, in the 1850's, they wrote the purest, noblest Christmas stories! I have one here. It concerns the fair-haired Herbert, aged twenty and plunging busily into London Vice. He had gone, we read, to "one of the most seductive, exciting and dangerous of its orgies"—a Christmas Eve masquerade. Then the lucky fellow had a dream of angels, which sent him steaming home to Devonshire on the new railway, and allowed him to pocket a lovely girl on the way.

Farewell, rewards and fairies! We must tackle the thing in our own fashion, and instead of judging Herbert, elect a Committee to sit on Christmas (they have only sat on *until* Christmas so far). It will need careful choosing; we are to have no uplift and no whimsy. On the other hand, commercial interests are banned. Since Christmas is a family festival, it had best be a Committee of the Whole House. That is to say, the whole household, from Father to kitchen-maid, not excluding the Irish cook's visiting policeman. But there may be no policeman and, to the prejudice of Christmas, no cook either. The rest of the household, so cordially gathered in the paternal nest, are of mixed opinions; the Committee room is no home of swelling bosoms.

Of course, the attempt to collect them all has failed. George has gone airily ski-ing without a conscience. Edith has dutifully, and with many a grumble, stayed at home. Of the two married couples, one has disappointed Father by its absence, the other exhausted Mother by its idle presence. An undesirable nephew has chosen the place as his hotel. And so on.

However, a certain amount of business is transacted; to wit, a discussion on the task of buying, giving and receiving presents. It is unanimously agreed that the battle of the shops, with its attendant elbow-work, foot-work and eye-work, and its subsequent headache, exhaustion and disapproval of the day's purchases, must be abandoned. Besides, it is often more horrifying to receive than give. The number and variety of white elephants that go bounding through respectable dwellings at Christmas-time would stock a whole jungleful of bazaars. The Committee also reports a dead loss on

the matter of the three T's—Temper, Time and Trouble. Being forbidden, by our ban on finance, to report the largest domestic loss of all, it falls to bickering over trivialities. Some vote for continuing trees "to please the kiddies"; some are for abolishing Christmas-cards, or at least their afforestation of the mantelpiece.

Then comes a lively argument as to the precise point where carols end and caterwauling begins. And this is the Committee's undoing. For, having grown raucous and a little merry in its efforts to illustrate these twain, it is invaded suddenly by the dauntless ghost of my too-great great-Uncle Charles. That jovial phantom quenches all argument by the drawing of a cork, and gives us the good old Christmas spirit, bottled on his estate and in almost prime condition. All take a swig, including the chairman, whose shouts of "Order! Order!" develop into "Order the Stilton and a case of old port." The whole Committee raise their glasses of Christmas Glory (*now* we know it), and toast the thing they 'd sat on. Being let down, we can do no less than follow their example, and in defiance of our sane and sober judgment, drink heartily to the ancestral ghost before he fades again.

THE END.

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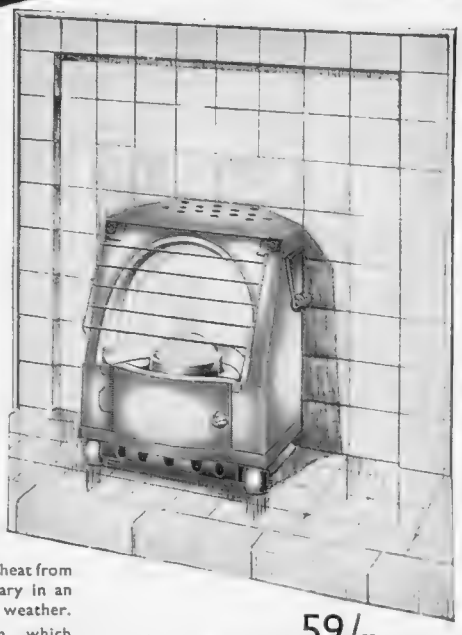

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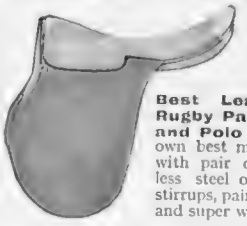

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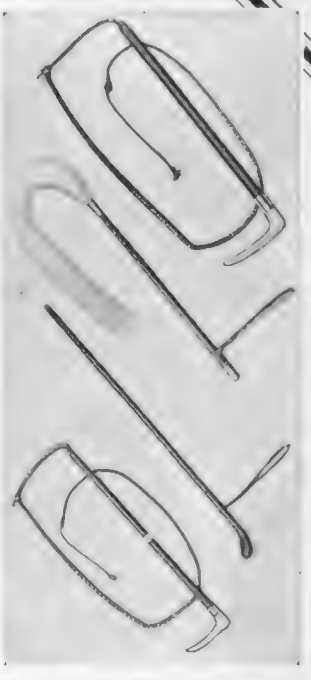

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Harry's Bicycle *(Continued from page 66)*

he would clean it, burn all the old enamel off it, and repaint it—silver! How would Harry like that? A silver bike! It would be as good as new. Better!

Harry was thrilled, and his father started on it right away. They were going to remove on Sunday morning, so if it was to be done at all it had better be done straight away, whilst he wasn't too busy. Yes, he knew Sunday morning was a funny time, but it was the only time the man who removed people could come along—Harry mustn't breathe a word about it to any of his friends, because they didn't want people to know they were moving on a Sunday morning. Time enough for them to talk about that (chipped in Harry's mother) when they actually saw them moving.

The bike looked wonderful when it was finished. It really did look quite as good as new. Harry was dying to ride it, but it had to dry for a time first, and it stood up-ended in the shed outside, with open newspapers underneath.

The furniture van came first thing Sunday morning, but in all the bustle and excitement of moving things about, the bicycle was the focus of Harry's thoughts and attention. If it was put in the van first it would be buried there for ages—and perhaps even broken, by having things piled up against it. When the man did actually take it he was so casual that Harry wanted to cry out to him—he 'd got one arm through the frame and the watering-can in his hand, scraping against it; whilst in his other hand there was a bundle of garden canes which might also scrape against it at any moment. Harry followed the man, his heart in his mouth, but the bicycle, when the man put it down on the pavement by the side of the van, was undamaged.

Harry looked up from his inspection to find Tom Martin standing by his side.

"Look at my bike," said Harry.

"Yes," said Tom, shyly. "You 're going away?"

"Yes," said Harry. He felt shy, too. "It 's nice, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Tom, and then, seeing his mother, turned away very readily.

Harry stooped down again and felt the tyres. Hard as iron. He turned the wheels to make sure both the dust-caps were on the valves. They were. None of the oil-caps were open and the brakes were in order. Not a spot of the silver enamel had rubbed off anywhere. He rang the bell, listened to it gravely, and tightened it a little. The furniture men, struggling past him with the sideboard, claimed not a moment of his attention. He rang the bell again, listened to it with even greater gravity, and unscrewed the top to just the extent he 'd previously screwed it up. He looked hopefully down the road, but none of the other boys he knew were about. It was very early.

He put one leg over the saddle and looked down at the lamp. Was it just the slightest bit crooked? He stood the bike up again and went round to the front, seized the bracket in both hands, and moved it a trifle. That was better. Yes, that was just right.

He looked up, suddenly aware that somebody was standing by his side. It was a man; a man he 'd seen before. He smiled cautiously, and then recognised it was the man from the bike shop. His smile became broader and he straightened himself up.

"What d'you think of that?" he asked, putting his head a little on one side and looking down at the bicycle from what he imagined might be the man's critical angle.

"Very nice too," said the man, who got hold of the saddle and lifted the back of the bike up. He looked very carefully under the saddle and then pulled a folded paper out of an inside pocket. He studied the paper and then studied the underneath of the saddle; then he put the bike down and waved his walking-stick, and another man who had been standing across the road came over.

Harry hoped the other man would like it, too. "My dad painted that," he said.

"He did, did he?" said the man. "Where is your father?"

"He 's in the house somewhere," said Harry. "D'you want him? I 'll go and tell him if you like."

"Yes, do," said the man, and Harry smiled up at him again and went racing back into the house. The man picked up the bike and looked down the road, where a motor-car was moving slowly towards him.

THE END.

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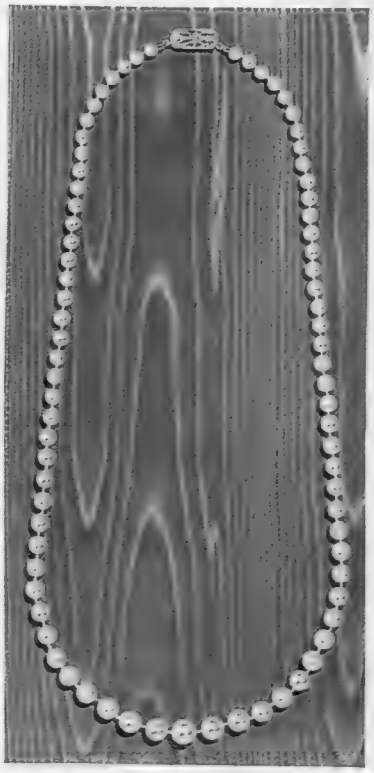

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We offer a REAL PEARL NECKLET (Cultured) of fine quality and orient, length 18 inches, including a GENUINE DIAMOND CLASP. FOR 4 GUINEAS. We guarantee all Pearl Necklets sold by us to be comprised of Genuine Oriental Pearls (Cultured) and grown in the living Oyster. We are exclusive Pearl Specialists and hold a large stock of Important and specimen quality Necklets at investment prices.

Selection for approval on request.

REAL (CULTURED) PEARL Co. LTD
14, Dover Street, London, W.1
Regent 6623

The Perfect Scream

(Continued from page 18)

Well the party went on and after Eddie's success everybody George had ever played a joke on took a crack at him because all at once they weren't afraid of him any more. And they rode him good. The last one was little Wesley Pringle whom George had once sent clear to Buffalo to look up a fake inheritance. Wesley stood behind George when he made one of his burlesque bows and as George bent down there was a sound of tearing cloth and he stood up quick and looked around and there was Wesley with the halves of a handkerchief that he had torn in two. Very funny said George but it 's your handkerchief. And he laughed. O no it isn't said Wesley. It 's yours ! I took it out of your pocket. And then he laughed and so did everybody else but George who stopped.

Well Henry had looked on all the time and he hadn't laughed much any more and at last he said to Gladys We 'd better get George out of here before they tear him to shreds. I don't understand it said Gladys. He 's a sheep in wolf's clothing said Henry and they 've found it out. He 's the velvet hand in the iron glove. Well I don't care said Gladys. I think it 's mean and you started it and I could never marry a mean man and so here 's your ring. What ! said Henry. Why I was just trying to have a sense of humour ! Well have it somewhere else said Gladys. I 'm not interested. And she went over to George and put her hand through his arm and said Come on George. I 'm tired now and will you take me home ? Henry wants to stay and anyway we 're not engaged any more. So they went and Henry stayed and had a swell time.

Well George and Gladys got married and they didn't ever go out to many parties afterward but George was quite funny around the home so that Gladys had plenty of good laughs. But Henry bought all George's false whiskers and funny badges and trick gadgets through a third party for two dollars and a half and he became a great success socially and finally even learned to play a little on the ukulele. And in the end he gave the engagement ring that Gladys had given back to him to Daisy Cluett who had a lot of money and looked quite pretty with her spectacles off. And they got married and Henry was made vice-president of the West Gomorrah Trust and Safe Deposit Co. So everything came out even all around. THE END.

—and Henry was made vice-president—

AN UNUSUAL AND INTERESTING XMAS GIFT

THE "QUEEN MARY"

Interest in our Fleet and our mighty ocean Liners was never greater than it is to-day. From the designs of G. H. Davis (Special artist of "The Illustrated London News") have been produced accurate scale working models of some of the greatest and most famous ships in the British Navy, and many world renowned liners The models are electrically propelled. Details of R.M.S. *Queen Mary* are:— Overall length 34 ins. Price, including packing, £3.3.0. Carriage inland 1 6 each. Abroad 5 9 each South Africa 8 3 each.

H.M.S. "NELSON"

This wonderful model is now available. A powerful electric motor is fitted, and when you are unable to use your ship on the water, you can manœuvre it by hand, using mobile trolleys which can be supplied at an extra cost of 2/-. The model floats perfectly and is a built-to-scale model of one of Great Britain's most mighty battleships. Details are:— Overall length 26 ins. Price £1.15.0. Carriage Inland 1 6 each. Abroad 4/- each; South Africa 5.9 each.

Included with each ship is a set of International Code Signal Flags by which inter-communication between ships is possible.

Orders with remittance should be sent to:

LONDON ELECTROTYPE AGENCY LTD.
23/24 FETTER LANE, LONDON, E.C.4

Straightening and shortening of nose before and after.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Delicate, refined lines express distinction. By the very latest development of the famous Hystogen Method for improving the features, any unsightly nose may be modelled to the desired form. Hooked, humped, drooping, bulbous, wide, saddle, pointed, etc., all these imperfections are corrected without a sign of interference, as manipulation is effected from the *inside* of the nose only. The amazing success of the Hystogen Method is based on the handling of 10,000 successful cases over a period of 30 years. Consultation and Literature free. Hours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

THE HYSTOGEN INSTITUTE, Old Quebec House, Old Quebec Street,
CORNER OF 19, SEYMOUR STREET, PORTMAN SQUARE, W.1. *Tel.: Pad. 5912.*

Regd. Trade Mark

ROWLAND'S MACASSAR OIL

FOR ALL SHADES OF HAIR
IT PROMOTES THE GROWTH, GIVES LIFE, AND LUSTRE AND LONG DELAYS THINNING

3/6, 7/- and 10/6, from Chemists, Stores and Hairdressers

Send for Free Booklet on the Hair

A. ROWLAND & SONS, LTD.
22 LAYSTALL STREET, ROSEBERY AVENUE, LONDON, E.C.1

Lovely BUST in 30 Days

"DEVELOPED My BUST 4½ ins." writes Miss G. A.

A beautiful bust can be acquired by every woman. You can have perfect fascinating curves with BEAUTIPON, the amazing Vegetable Flesh Former. Simply rub this harmless cream into the skin last thing at night and in a few weeks you will have a glorious figure. Develops bust 3 to 6 ins. Adds healthy flesh anywhere. Guaranteed harmless—amazing results. Miss G.A. (see photo, published by special permission) writes: "*I have actually developed my bust 4½ inches, and my breasts are now a lovely shape, high and firm. It is a joy to me to be told how young I look. I am so pleased with Beautipon Cream.*" This is a typical example of thousands of letters received in praise of Beautipon Cream treatment. You, too, can increase your bust 3 to 6 ins. and have lovely rounded feminine curves. Beautipon Cream treatment acts upon the mammary glands, breast cells and pores, and nourishes, builds, and strengthens the bust as no other method can. There's no need to have a "clothes-peg" figure any longer. Let Beautipon Cream treatment give you those rich, lovely lines, softly yet firmly moulded, the generous swelling curves of fascinating womanhood. Trial Treatment 1/6, or the full 30 days' Course only 5/6 post free. Sent privately under plain sealed cover. Money back if not delighted. Post form to-day—NOW! BEAUTIPON, 28, (B10), Dean Road, London, N.W.2

POST THIS FORM—*NOW!*

Beautipon, 28 (B10), Dean Rd., London, N.W.2

(A) Please send me your full 30 days' Beautipon Course, for which I enclose 5 6

(B) Please send Trial Treatment, for which I enclose 1/6 *Cross out A or B

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

..... Bystander, 25/11/38

PRINTED IN ENGLAND BY THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS & SKETCH, LTD., Milford Lane, Strand, London, W.C.2, and Published by ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPERS, LTD., at 32-34, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.4.—FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1938. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York (N.Y.) Post Office.
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CHRISTMAS PRELUDE

The picturesque gown on the left is in black poult with gold lamé braids whilst the Grecian Gown is in dull crêpe in black, royal and crème de rose. Priced at seven guineas each they are available in sizes 38 to 43 hips.

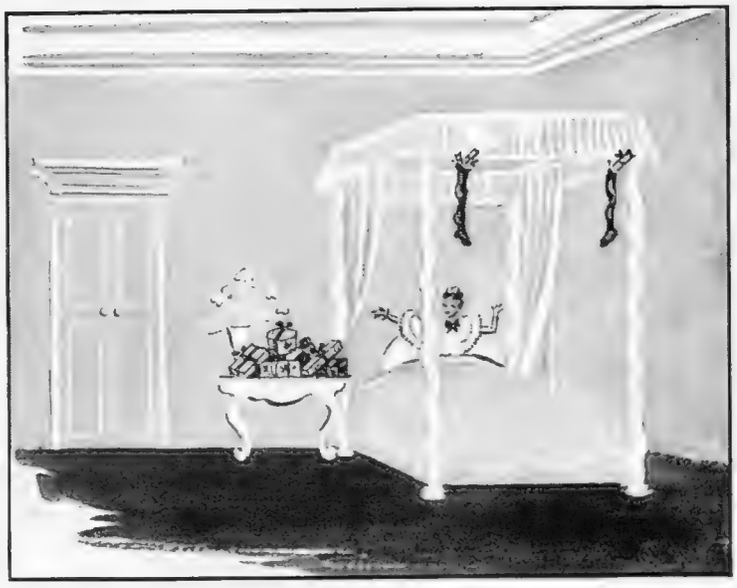
MARSHALL & SNELGROVE

Debenhams Ltd.

Oxford Street, London, W.1.

Inexpensive Gowns—First Floor.

Gifts



Don't forget Her

You provide the girl-friend, sister, mother or sweetheart, and we provide the gifts. Harvey Nichols is the place to come. Harvey Nichols have everything that is lovely. Gloves, handkerchiefs, fine stockings, lingerie, jewellery, furs. And Harvey Nichols will put her gift in a beautiful box.

Harvey Nichols and Co., Ltd., London, S.W.1

Harvey Nichols of Knightsbridge

"LA NATURELLE" TRANSFORMATION

Ladies will find my new brochure of "La Naturelle" head-dresses, bandlettes, curls, etc.,

"VERY USEFUL AND INTERESTING"

Don't fail to send postcard to-day — or telephone VIC. 5943 for your copy—post free.

MAISON GEORGES

ONLY ADDRESS: 40 BUCKINGHAM PALACE RD. LONDON S.W.1.

ESTABLISHED OVER QUARTER OF A CENTURY.

SALUTATIONS

by SAGE

FOR HER

HIM

Here is something she should be the first to have—

A vapour weight woman's seat stick which is lighter than her vanity case—perfectly elegant in black and silver grey. It costs 2½ guineas.

Here at last for him an utterly usable tie rack—it is built on black or brown and its price is one half guinea.

Investigate these at your store or outfitters or if you are abroad write to D M SAGE 3 MARKET ST. OXFORD

Charities at Christmas

Some Deserving National Causes

Will You Be Their Santa Claus?

These toddlers are members of the Waifs and Strays Society's family, one of the several noble organisations described below which care for needy children. Will you help them this Christmas?

At Christmas, good Christian men not only rejoice, but help others to rejoice with a subscription to some of the many welfare organisations that depend largely on public generosity Below are named and briefly described some of these organisations, which we heartily recommend to the notice of our readers.

Conscription Against Cancer

The Royal Cancer Hospital, Fulham Road, is supported entirely by voluntary gifts. No payments are asked from patients. No recommendation-letters are necessary. The only

(*Continued on page* D)

"No greater claim upon our pity"

WARWICK DEEPING writes:

"Not only as one who has been a doctor, but as a man who has watched someone who was very dear to him martyred by this terrible disease, I do appeal to those who can help to come to the succour of The Royal Cancer Hospital. No institution could have a greater claim both upon our pity and our purses."

Help is urgently needed to build Four New Wards. Please send a Special Christmas Gift to the Treasurer.

The Royal Cancer Hospital

(FREE)

FULHAM ROAD - LONDON, S.W.3

Any P.D.S.A. Dispensary any day of the week could provide a picture like this. All day long sick or injured animals and their "bosses" young and old arrive to wait their turn for free treatment.

*

Every year the P.D.S.A. treats over a million cases of sick and injured animals belonging to poor people. All animals treated, all treatment free.

*

The P.D.S.A. has sixty-six Dispensaries, twelve Caravan Dispensaries and seven Hospitals at Home, and is established in Eire, France, Tangier, Roumania, Greece, Egypt, South Africa, Dutch East Indies and Palestine.

*

Established 21 years ago, it is the only organisation founded exclusively for the free treatment of animals.

*

To its work of healing the P.D.S.A. has added the work of protection by inventing a gas proof safety kennel. This is the only type of kennel in the world which would afford complete protection in time of emergency. Full particulars will gladly be sent on request.

There is no Christmas for the P.D.S.A. It is a non-stop work. Day and night it must go on alleviating pain and suffering amongst the animals of poor people. Will you give them a thought this Christmastide?

Hundreds of thousands of sick and injured animals are treated free every year. It is not only the friend of the sick animal but the friend of the poor man. It has saved many thousands from becoming unemployed by giving free treatment to the breadwinner of their families—the horse, donkey or pony.

Alas! there are thousands of poor people's animals left to suffer for lack of money. If you could only see the animals brought to our Dispensaries and Hospitals and the great work we are doing amongst them, you would want to help us immediately. We are anxious to act for you if you will make it possible, for we are entirely dependent on voluntary contributions.

Do please send a Christmas gift to the Hon. Treasurer, the Rt. Hon. Viscount Tredegar, the P.D.S.A. (these initials will be sufficient on your cheque), 14 Clifford St., London, W.1.

The PEOPLE'S DISPENSARY for SICK ANIMALS OF THE POOR, INC.

14, CLIFFORD STREET, LONDON, W.1.

This advertisement has been given to the P.D.S.A. by a generous friend as a thank offering for peace.

4,800 BABIES, CRIPPLES, BOYS AND GIRLS NOW IN OUR CARE.

1/= will provide a Christmas stocking.

2/6 will purchase a pudding.

5/= will feed a child for one week.

£1 will provide a CHRISTMAS DINNER for 20 children.

WILL YOU BE THEIR SANTA CLAUS?

42,000 CHILDREN ALREADY PROVIDED FOR.

The Smallest GIFT Gratefully received by The Secretary

WAIFS & STRAYS

KENNINGTON SOCIETY LONDON S.E.11.

Charities at Christmas *(Continued from page C)*

passports are the facts that the applicant is afflicted by cancer or tumour and is unable to pay. In addition to the care of patients, a Research Institute is carried on by a trained scientific staff, engaged in investigating the problems of this fell disease.

Dr. Barnardo's Homes

So many tempting things are being displayed in the shop windows just now that it is quite difficult to know what to buy for your Christmas presents. Money will buy almost everything; it will even buy happiness in some circumstances. Imagine the happiness of a child's face—a needy child—when it realises that it has not been forgotten after all at Christmas time. In Dr. Barnardo's Homes there are 8200 destitute children who are at this moment hoping that their many needs may be remembered this year, as in past Christmas seasons. Will you get out your cheque-book now and send a gift to Barnardo House, Stepney Causeway, London, E.1? Orders, etc., should be crossed and made payable to "Dr. Barnardo's Homes."

This Might Concern You

The Imperial Cancer Research Fund was founded in 1902, as a centre for research and information on cancer, the disease which strikes impartially, and might strike you. It is working unceasingly on the systematic investigation of the disease in man and animals. Donations, subscriptions and legacies should be sent to the Honorary Treasurer, c/o Royal College of Surgeons of England, Lincolns Inn Fields, London, W.C.2.

The Silver Lady Fund

So much has already been said in this journal and elsewhere about Miss Betty Baxter—the Silver Lady—that her work needs no introduction. But let us give you figures for this year's work among London's down-and-outs: 80,000 free meals, 36,000 free bed and breakfast tickets, some thousands of articles of clothing distributed. Her offices are at 6, Tudor Street, E.C.4.

A World-wide Campaign

The British Empire Cancer Campaign, through its research centres, is conducting an energetic attack upon the disease. Not only is it trying to discover the cause, but it has been successful through research in improving methods of treatment. All contributions will be gratefully received by the Hon. Treasurer, at 12, Grosvenor Crescent, Hyde Park Corner, S.W.1.

IMPERIAL CANCER RESEARCH FUND

Patron—HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE KING.
President—THE RT. HON VISCOUNT HALIFAX, K.G., P.C.
Chairman of the Executive Committee—SIR HUMPHRY ROLLESTON, BT., G.C.V.O., K.C.B.
Hon. Treasurer—SIR HOLBURT WARING, BT., C.B.E., F.R.C.S.

Founded in 1902, under the direction of the Royal College of Physicians of London and the Royal College of Surgeons of England as a centre for research and information on cancer, The Imperial Cancer Research Fund is working unceasingly on the systematic investigation of the disease in man and animals. The work of this Fund and of other great centres of research has increased our knowledge of the origin and nature of cancer and has so altered our outlook that the disease is now curable in increasing numbers. Our previous accommodation has become too limited and **we have recently built new modern laboratories** to extend the scope of our investigations. The income from investments and the Endowment Fund is insufficient to cover the total annual expenditure, and help is urgently needed to meet the heavy additional cost of expansion.

Donations, Subscriptions and Legacies are earnestly solicited and should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, c/o Royal College of Surgeons of England, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.2.

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I hereby bequeath the sum of £ to the Treasurer of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund under the direction of the Royal College of Physicians of London and the Royal College of Surgeons of England, c/o Royal College of Surgeons of England, Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, W.C.2, for the purpose of Scientific Research, and I direct that his receipt shall be a good discharge for such legacy.

HOT TEA, BREAD and DRIPPING at Midnight

is given free to hundreds of homeless and hungry men and women from

THE SILVER LADY'S
NIGHT TRAVELLING CAFE

Many thousands of Bed and Breakfast tickets also given.

Please help by sending a Xmas Gift of money to MISS BETTY BAXTER:

THE SILVER LADY FUND, 6 TUDOR STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

The General Hospital serving a Million Poor

RNH

The Hospital serves a million poor in North London and there are very many mothers among the patients whose families anxiously await their return. Everywhere in this district there is poverty, hardship and suffering, but very little money. £174,000 has been received or promised towards £350,000 needed for reconditioning and rebuilding.

Please send a Christmas gift to the Treasurer.

ROYAL NORTHERN HOSPITAL

HOLLOWAY, LONDON, N.7

The Royal Northern Hospital

THIS hospital is regarded by many thousands of poor North Londoners as their hope in illness and disease, and it depends on you not to have to let them down. £5000 will name a ward, £750 will endow a bed. Then there are coal bills, egg bills, nurses' accommodation. No sum is too small to help its fine work. Contributions and enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary, Holloway, N.7.

John Groom's Crippleage

THIS organisation, whose headquarters are 37, Sekforde Street, E.C.1, has as aim the training of crippled girls. It also runs a holiday home at Clacton, a Flower Girls' Christian Mission, and a subsidiary Orphanage. In all cases, stress is laid not only on material but on spiritual assistance to the needy. It should be a matter of shame to all that another slight decrease in subscriptions is reported. To remedy this, please send donations to the Secretary at the above address.

Do Not Forget the Children

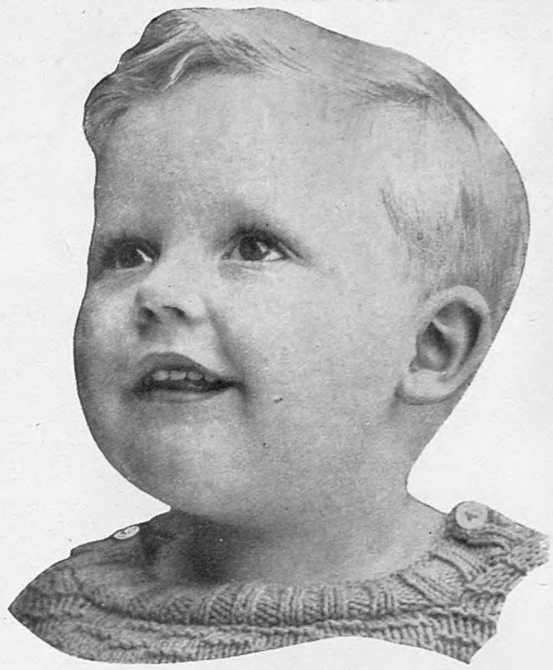
As well as Dr. Barnardo's Homes and Groom's Crippleage, mentioned above, two other organisations for children must be especially remembered at this time—the children's festival.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has 270 inspectors working unobtrusively and tactfully throughout Britain. In helping the Society, you are helping to protect and comfort the defenceless and sensitive coming generation from—shameful though it seems—anger and cruelty that still abound. Donations should be sent to the Director, Victory House, Leicester Square, W.C.2.

The Waifs and Strays Society has a family of 4800 babies, cripples, boys and girls. During the year, more than a thousand needy little ones have been taken in. These figures should be enough to command your material help. The Society's address is Kennington, S.E.11.

Animals of the Poor

ONE of the most charming and touching ideas—to treat the poor people's beloved animal friends free—was put into practice just twenty-one years ago. The People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, which now attains majority, treats a million cases a year, at home and abroad. To all animal lovers—especially those who can be sure of expensive veterinary treatment for their pets—we commend the P.D.S.A. Lord Tredegar, Hon. Treasurer, will receive gifts at 14, Clifford Street, W.1.



WILL ALL

FATHERS, MOTHERS, UNCLES AUNTS and everyone interested in children, please remember to post a contribution towards the CHRISTMAS HAPPINESS of 8,200 boys and girls in

DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES

CHRISTMAS GIFTS of **10/-** and upwards would be most welcome.

Cheques, etc. (crossed), payable Dr. Barnardo's Homes, should be sent to 74 Barnardo House, Stepney Causeway, London, E.1.

WILL YOU BE A 'FATHER CHRISTMAS' TO OUR CRIPPLED GIRLS?

There are large numbers of crippled girls so seriously handicapped that they cannot hope to earn a living unaided.

We have under our care 340 such girls who have become largely self-supporting because we have trained them to make beautiful artificial flowers.

We have a long Waiting List for admission to the Crippleage. Must we say No! No! No! to the pathetic appeals for this aid?

In addition, we maintain an orphanage of 200 girls from babies up to 15 years. These, and our other activities, call for generous assistance to this Christian enterprise.

Report gladly sent on request.

JOHN GROOM'S CRIPPLEAGE AND FLOWER-GIRLS' MISSION (Inc.)

37, Sekforde Street, Clerkenwell, London, E.C.1

WAR WHICH *CANNOT* CEASE

The British Empire Cancer Campaign is waging war on cancer on four fronts:—

1 By laboratory research into the causes and cure of cancer.

2 By clinical cancer research at the great Teaching Hospitals.

3 By financial aid to many institutions engaged in the fight against cancer.

4 By medical propaganda impressing upon the public the urgent necessity of seeking advice in the early stages of the disease.

As a thank-offering for Peace, please send a gift to the Hon. Treasurer to enable this humanitarian war to go on.

Patron: H.M. The King **BRITISH EMPIRE CANCER CAMPAIGN** *President: H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester K.G.*

Please send a Special Christmas Gift to the Hon. Treasurer:

British Empire Cancer Campaign, 12, Grosvenor Crescent, London, S.W.1

When looking at your own loved one, or of those of other families . . . .

—DO YOU ever think of that other child—for whose protection the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children came into existence 54 years ago?

But for the intervention of this National Voluntary Society last year, 120,995 future citizens would be suffering to-day.

★**PLEASE SEND A CHRISTMAS GIFT to Wm. J. Elliott, O.B.E., Director, N.S.P.C.C., Victory House, Leicester Square, London, W.C.2**

N·S·P·C·C

Quality

QUALITY first . . . that is the guiding principle in the manufacture of 'Ovaltine.' Upon its supreme quality and unrivalled nutritive properties millions of people throughout the world rely for health and fitness.

The whole 'Ovaltine' organisation reflects the exceptional steps taken in the interests of 'Ovaltine' quality. The 'Ovaltine' Factory is acknowledged to be "the ideal of what a food factory should be." The 'Ovaltine' Dairy Farm, with its prize-winning Jersey Herd, and the 'Ovaltine' Egg Farm, extending over 350 acres, are amongst the most up-to-date and scientifically conducted farms in existence.

Thus the highest standards of quality and purity are ensured for the ingredients of 'Ovaltine.' The finest barley malt extract, the purest of milk and the freshest of new-laid eggs are combined by exclusive scientific processes. The result is a complete tonic food which contains every nutritive element required to build up perfect fitness of body, brain and nerves.

For all these reasons 'Ovaltine' stands in a class alone for quality and health-giving value. And as quality is all-important where health is concerned, make 'Ovaltine' the regular daily beverage for every member of your family. ***Quality always tells.***

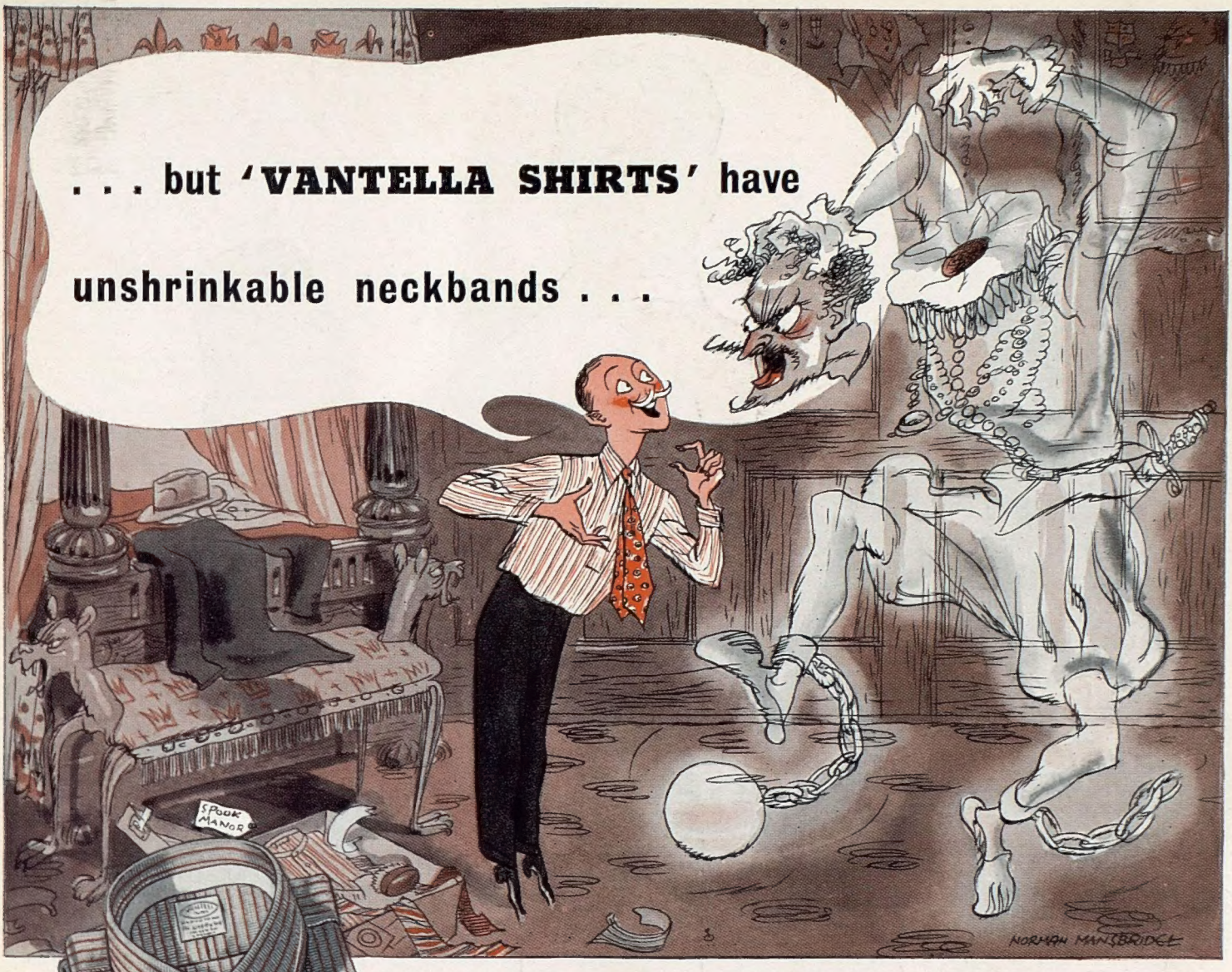
OVALTINE

Supreme for Health

Prices in Great Britain and N. Ireland, 1/1, 1/10 & 3/3

Drink delicious OVALTINE–*and note the Difference!*

P417a



And for anyone more substantial than a ghost that's something to remember. Besides, Vantella shirts have other very special features. The "Van Heusen" curve-woven, semi-stiff cuffs for instance. Then the collars—"Van Heusen" again—are perpetually smart and comfortable, *and* tabless, boneless and buttonless—blessings every man appreciates. As for the cloth, it's fadeless and unshrinkable, in dapper designs or plain colours. Add to that the three sleeve lengths to every neckband size and it's clear why Vantella shirts will be appreciated. You can get them at any good outfitter, 9/6d. in Zephyr, 10/9d. in poplin de luxe, and the "Van Heusen" collars to match are 1/3d. each.

Give him a

'VANTELLA' *regd.*

shirt . . . with

'VAN HEUSEN' *regd*

collars to match

"Van Heusen" fittings are made by Harding, Tilton & Hartley Ltd., London. For pattern card showing the designs apply to Cotella Ltd., 14 Moor Lane, London, E.C.2.

THE WORLD OVER

THEY WILL BE TOASTING CHRISTMAS WITH

"BLACK & WHITE"

BECAUSE *it's the Scotch!*